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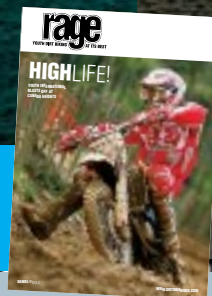


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110

SHUT OUT!



June

2006

DIRTBIKE
RIDER



COMMENT

THREE ROUNDS of the British championship down, three GPs (four by the time this issue of DBR hits the shelves) done and dusted plus the domestic and world enduro and trials series up and running. Like suburban couples up and down the country, the season is in full swing...

In the DBR office April's been, in the words of our big-chinned Irish technical editor, flat-out like a lizard drinking. There have been a lot of exciting changes going on this month and on top of that a couple of white-knuckle rides to the ends of the earth (well, Kent and Hampshire to be exact) in Sutt's Vito to keep us all busy.

We've had a bit of a shake-up of the columns this month, dragging Swordy's and Gordy's bits into the news section and swapping Fast Eddy with a new column that goes by the stunningly unoriginal name of Jonty's Box. Written by former DBR production editor Jonty Edmunds, the column will dig deep into the world of enduros and cross country racing – starting this month with an in-depth analysis of what's wrong (and right) with the new-look WEC. Now's probably a good time to say a huge thanks to the Fast One for all his contributions to DBR over the years – and all you Eddy fans out there needn't worry, you'll still be seeing plenty of him in the mag in the future...

We're also delighted to welcome the enfant terrible of British MX to the team in the shape of Billiam MacKenzie and his Mac211 column. Billy's one of the most exciting and out-spoken riders on the world scene and his column gives a real insight into what's going on inside his wee Scottish head – from play riding in Portugal to the importance of a spot of gentle parental persuasion!

So they are the main changes that have been keeping us busy in the office during the working week – then there's the little matter of breaking the sound barrier in the Dawg-mobile, first to Canada Heights and then three weeks later down to Matchams Park. If you're going to go to back-to-back British championship rounds you could do a lot worse than these which are without a doubt two of the best circuits in the UK.

And it's not just the tracks that stand out. You only have to walk around a British championship paddock to see how much time, passion and moolah is invested in top level MX in this country. The teams really dig deep to produce professional looking set-ups with their huge transporters, hospitality areas and immaculately turned out bikes and riders.

The racing's pretty s**t-hot too – it may have got a little monotonous at the front of the MX1 class with Swordy clearing off at Canada Heights and De Dycker doing the same at Matchams but the MX2 action more than made up for that. Billy, Nunny, Swanny, Tommy, Smith(y) and Bradley really cracked it wide open which went a long way to prove that our domestic series is possibly the best anywhere in the world outside of America.

Sean



Pichon's been laid low with a virus

ORANGE CRUSH!

Double blow to KTM's MX1 title hopes

KTM'S PLANS of dethroning MX1 king Stefan Everts suffered a killer blow last month with both of their French hired guns – signed up to deny the Belgian a record 10th world crown in his retirement year – out of action.

First two-time 250 champ Mickael Pichon was forced to withdraw indefinitely from the series with a mystery virus, then Seb Tortelli dislocated his hip in a crash at the Portuguese GP and faces a lay-off of two months.

Pichon was struggling as far back as the first GP of the year in Zolder on April 2. The virus – which so far has not responded to antibiotics – has left him with an irregular heartbeat.

"Everything was great until a few weeks before the 2006 season started and then I fell ill with a virus," explains the 29-year-old. "I am really disappointed, this was my big chance being back in a factory team and for the MX1 crown. But my health is the most important thing and I have to be fit before starting to think about riding again."

KTM's fortunes then went from bad to critical in Portugal when Tortelli crashed heavily while chasing Everts in the second race. It will be two months before his hip ligaments have recovered sufficiently for him to race again.

"Of course on the one hand I am bitterly disappointed, especially for the team," says Tortelli. "Thanks to the unbelievable dedication of the technical staff they've always supplied me with the best possible bike. We were totally on track in Portugal and right up to my fall we were absolutely competitive."

There is, however, some good news in the KTM camp with Jonathan Barragan celebrating his first podium in Portugal and, down in MX2, Tyla Rattray taking the first three GP overalls of the season.

• As DBR was about to wing its way to the printers the French MX press were reporting that Pichon has, in fact, retired – although this has not been confirmed by KTM.



Tortelli faces a two-month lay-off

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WIN! WIN! WIN!

British GP tickets

THERE'S NOTHING in life that's much finer than propping up a chestnut fence with your bestest buddy and taking in all the great race action of your home-country motocross grand prix.

And aside from a British clean-sweep of the podium is there anything that could make that day even better – like free tickets or a VIP pass say?

Well thanks to Bike-It promotions and your favourite magazine – that's DBR, dude – you've now got the chance to witness all the action at Matterley Basin for free! That's because we've got 10 pairs of tickets plus a single pair of VIP passes (think Willy Wonka's golden tickets but with less chocolate and no factory or oompah-loompahs) to the British MXGP that's being held at the all-new JDH-designed circuit near Winchester on June 17/18.

All you've got to do to win one of the 11 prizes is answer this simple non-chocolate related question.

Who was the last British overall winner of a British motocross GP?

Was it:

- A) Carl Nunn
- B) Billy MacKenzie
- C) Dave Thorpe
- D) Jeremy Whatley
- E) Jeff Smith
- F) Jamie Dobb
- G) Charles 'Charlie' Charleson

If you know the answer – and you'd actually like to win one of our fantastic prizes – then write it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number then pop it in the post to: GP Comp, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, LA4 4AG.

Entries close on June 1 with the first correct entry winning the VIP passes and the next 10 out of the hat winning a pair of tickets each.



SCHOOL OF DIRT!

TYLA RATTRAY, Charlie Hollis and DBR trials tester Dan 'Clarky' Clark are rubbing shoulders with ye knights of olde on the wall of a school in Wolverhampton thanks to mural and airbrush artist Nick Smith.

Nick was called in as artist in residence to produce the mural and took the dirt bike route when confronted by the MX-mad pupils. Unfortunately, the mural was produced at the expense of the drama department's noticeboard so the knights were added to keep the school thespians happy.

Nick's available for commissions – for more examples of his excellent artwork check out his website at www.nicksmithworld.com



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

Oxtar boots must be won

TOP QUALITY boots cost a pretty penny so how lucky would you feel if we sent you a pair of these 250 nicker Oxtar TCX Pro 2 boots for free in the second of our back-to-back boot comps!

The TCX Pro 2s come in a choice of beautiful colour combinations – grey/red, grey/grey, black/blue, black/grey and black/red – and for you to win a pair of these top-notch boots all you need to do is answer this simple question.

Which British three-man motocross team is sponsored by Oxtar boots in '06?

Is it:

- 1) Maximum Solutions Suzuki
- 2) MotoXtreme Kawasaki
- 3) RWJ Honda
- 4) Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure
- 5) The Olympic bobsleigh team

When you've figured out the answer write it down on the back of a postcard, sealed envelope

or a Bavarian otter and send it to us along with your name, address, a daytime telephone number plus boot size and desired colour combo to: Otters are Great, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 4AG.

Entries close on June 8 with the first correct answer being drawn out of an Oxtar boot box by a random otter sometime after the closing date getting the boots.



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Cover: Billy MacKenzie – he's mad, bad and dangerous to know! (Sutty)

Contents main image: STOP! Hammertime! Carl Nunny shows off some smooth moves at Matchams Park (pro-foto)



Carl Nunn replica 250SX-F must be won

OKAY, THIS is it, your third and final chance to win a brand new '06 KTM 250SX-F with a full Carl Nunn EA DBS Factory Graphics kit. And on top of that the very lucky winner will also get to take home Nunny's nifty Fox jeans and jersey from the first MX2 British championship race at Matchams plus a pair of his Spy goggles!

The competition kicked off in our May issue and continued in the June DBR before signing off this month so by now you should have either already sent in two entries – and plenty of people have – or be waiting for this final KTM-related question before stuffing all three into an envelope and sending them off.

Remember, each entry requires only one correct answer – this way if you've missed one of the competition issues you can still enter but, better still, if you've got all three mags you've got three separate shots at winning the SX-F. All we ask is that entries are submitted on official entry forms (no photocopies, computer scans etc).

Official closing date is July 7 with the first correct entry drawn at random after this date earning themselves the bike, kit and goggles...



QUESTION #3



Which KTM-backed rider won the '04 world MX2 title?

- A: Ben Townley
B: Tyla Rattray
C: Marc De Reuver

Answer.....

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Cut out this coupon and send it to
'Win a KTM', Dirt Bike Rider, 12 Victoria Street,
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Closing date for entries is July 7

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STEPHEN SWORD

BITTER-SWEET!

SWORDY GETS DOCKED A MINUTE FOR NOISE IN PORTUGAL. BUT AT LEAST THERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS BACK IN BRITAIN

YET AGAIN it's been another busy month with more than my fair share of ups and downs. It kicked off with round two of the British championship at Canada Heights. I had a big, big crash during the week at the Tonymoto practice track and hurt my back, neck and shoulder so I stayed at home the night before figuring I might sleep better in my own bed.

As it turned out it was a good move! The Canada Heights track was in great condition and I was loving the new sections they added. The day went perfect for me – it felt really good to win again in England and I had so much fun on the big bike. Definitely a turning point for me as I felt at the previous races I wasn't riding my best.

The next week was the GP of Spain at Bellpuig where things didn't go to plan at all. Saturday went okay and I qualified 11th but in Sunday morning's warm-up I tweaked my back going up one of the hills – the pain was sharp and took my breath away, different from anything I've experienced before. I got treated immediately and had two injections and painkillers before the race but I could only manage half a moto before I was in agony. I was gutted to leave Spain with no points.

In the week leading up to Portugal I had treatment on my back every day and it was much better by the time it came to line up at the gate. The GP was a bitter-sweet event for me – I was happy with sixth overall but failed a noise test at the end of the second moto and got docked a minute which dumped me back down the order. Still, being positive, at least my back didn't give me any trouble.

After Portugal Jodie and me flew back to England on the Monday but I was only home for a day before I had to fly out to Holland for testing and training to prepare for Matchams. Tuesday is my rest day and Jodie gets to

choose what we do so before I flew out we ended up going shopping, shopping and a little bit more shopping – there goes my bonus before I've even earned it! Instead of buying myself a flashy TV, a nice new pair of shoes or a pair of Diesel jeans I got a new lawnmower. The old one packed up and the grass was getting so long it looked more like a jungle than a lawn.

The next morning I was on a plane to Holland where my mechanic Luka picked me up from Eindhoven Airport. We tested some new bits on the bike and I worked on my riding technique and a few little things I feel I need to improve on. I flew back on Friday to get ready for Matchams and on Saturday afternoon I picked up my brother and dad from Southampton Airport. Then it was straight home to get ready for an early start on Sunday morning.

Things went well at Matchams and I had two strong rides behind Ken De Dycker – I knew he would be strong there as he's riding good at the moment but I thought I had a chance to beat him. Saying that, the championship is still close and there are five rounds to go so anything can happen.

Jodie's family came to watch me for the first time and it was great to have them all there supporting me – I think they had sore throats on Monday morning from shouting so much.

This week I'm off to Germany for the GP, setting off on Thursday in the camper. I've just got back from the Post Office where I taxed it for another year – £175! I thought that was a bit steep but, then again, I am Scottish.

Well guys, it's been a pleasure talking to you again and if you want to catch up on my latest news you can check out my website at www.swordymx.com

See ya!

AMCA UPDATE

Clitheroe and Hollis set the pace

Words and photo by Mike Wood

AN INFLUX of former ACU championship riders promises a shake up at the opening round of the '06 AMCA series at Hawkstone Park. But even former CAS Honda teamster Paul Coward, ex-Aiwa Yamaha young gun Richard-Mike Jones and one-time Millennium KTM man Phil Mercer can't make it to the top step of the podium.

Instead, the established AMCA stars demonstrate that there are no easy pickings to be had at Hawkstone with Rob Clitheroe taking the overall in the 125cc division from defending champ Brad O'Leary.

Clitheroe, sidelined for a big slice of the '05 season with an injured wrist, blasts to a three-race maximum to open up an early lead at the top of the championship table. O'Leary, out on his new AMS KTM, survives a scary moment at the top of the famous hill to post a 3-3-2 card and squeeze ahead of ex-BYMX star Mark Hooley who ties on points with 2-2-4 results but loses out on the final race rule.

Charlie Hollis was a serious contender for last year's Open crown until a badly busted leg sustained at Matchams ended his challenge. But he's back and means business and his 1-1-3 card hands him the series lead after the opening round.

Behind him 'Factory' Phil Mercer improves all day, going 3-2-1 to take second from Danny Blakeley. Rich-Mike is on the pace and has victory – and the chequered flag – in sight in the second moto but crashes back to fourth while defending champ Simon Lane also suffers in the sand and can only manage 10th overall.



Aaron Crowder's fifth in the Open class

Results

125cc

1 Rob Clitheroe	25+25+25=75
2 Brad O'Leary	20+20+22=62
3 Mark Hooley	22+22+18=62
4 Clinton Barrs	16+18+16=50
5 Rick Du-Feu	15+12+20=47

Open class

1 Charlie Hollis	25+25+20=70
2 Phil Mercer	20+22+25=67
3 Danny Blakeley	18+16+22=56
4 Elliot Barrs	22+15+14=51
5 Aaron Crowder	15+13+18=46



SAM SIGNS

MAKING THE switch from motocross to supermoto has paid off for Sam Warren who's landed a deal to contest the S1 world championship for the SR Off-Road Aprilia team.

"I'm over the moon to be associated with Aprilia and its V-twin – this deal has come at the perfect time in my career," says the 23-year-old Derbyshire man. "My goals for this season are to finish top six in the world champs and increase my pace sufficiently so that I can race regularly with the leading pack."

"If I can achieve this then for 2007 I aim to be in contention to win the championship."



MARGAM MAGIC!

THE UK'S finest freestylers are all set to battle it out in a three-round summer series hosted by the UKFMX team, FreestyleXtreme and Skin Industries at Margam Park in South Wales.

Riders including glamour-boy Gary Taylor, Chris Brock, Disco Dave Wiggins, Danny Veale and Jamie Squibb are all expected to tear it up so there'll be tricks-a-plenty including everyone's favourite – the back-flip!

As well as finding out just who is Britain's best, the series also aims to add a few squidly-did to UKFMX's charity of choice – the Fast 50 Learning Project. All the action kicks off on June 7 at 7pm and continues on July 19 before drawing to a close on September 12.

Admission is a bargaintastic £5 for adults with kiddies getting in for three. For more info check out www.ukfmf.com

TC RETURNS

MOLSON KAWASAKI'S Tom Church, out with a mystery injury for the last 10 months, could be back in action and riding like only he knows how (squirrely – SL) at the next British championship round at Landrake on May 28.

He's been back on a bike for nearly a month with no problems from the knee injury he sustained in a high-speed practice crash last summer after doctors finally found the cause of TC's torment.

"They couldn't find anything wrong with my knee or my hip so I had a scan on my back and one of the discs is slightly damaged and this could be sending signals down to my leg and causing problems."

"I had an epidural and it helped a lot and my leg feels much better. It's been terrible. Normally when you get injuries you find out what it is and how long it will take to get better but with this I've been going from doctor to doctor and that's disheartening. You know you're in pain and you know you can't ride but no-one knows what it is."

GORDON CROCKARD

GOB-SMACKED!

A ROCK IN THE KISSER IN SPAIN IS THE LEAST OF GORDY'S WORRIES – HE'S GOT A SERIOUSLY PISSED PUSSY WAITING FOR HIM BACK AT HOME

MY CAT Ronnie is so going to have a go at me! Amy and I have been on the road since mid-February now and some good friends of ours have been living in our house back home and hopefully feeding Ronnie plus Bingo and Mervyn, the two male over-zealous donkeys that like to congress together (to put it politely).

The time has totally flown by and I'd gladly live like this until the time comes when it's unnecessary to do so. The better weather we've all enjoyed lately has certainly made camping life a little easier. I'm still not experiencing the extreme highs I did in recent years of MX where I was winning GP races and the top man in the British championships too but I will continue to pursue this with passion and sheer dedication as I feel I can still get there in terms of satisfying results.

But I do feel I'm heading in the right direction and progress is being made in terms of encouraging performances on the track and in the gruelling running sessions midweek.

My championship aspirations aren't in a healthy state just now but that will take care of itself if I continue to work towards my weekly goals. Ultimately, I want to satisfy myself and achieve what I believe I'm capable of and thankfully I've had a few inspiring moments this year to encourage me on to better things. My team, my mechanic, my girlfriend, my family, my friends and my sponsors have all been fantastic in helping me strive towards doing the best I can do. Thank you all.

I was once told that luck is what you have left after you give 100 per cent. I agree that this is true and for sure I've experienced a few unlucky moments lately. On the journey to Canada Heights for the British championship meeting Amy and I were bombing down the M1 at about 80mph when a wayward pheasant flew sadly into the path of our camper. It smashed the Sky satellite dome into pieces and made a huge crash, bang, wallop explosion noise which immediately put the brakes on our trip! I pulled onto the hard shoulder and climbed onto the roof to sort it all out. The damn pheasant was actually still alive somehow so I helped it to the ground – hopefully it lived.

A few rolls of duct tape and some Blue Peter techniques fixed the dome for the weekend and we made it to the race on time. The first race was cut short as a paramedic got hit by a bike. I had just moved into fifth place and felt I could have moved further forward if the race had ran the full length. During the second race I had to do a drive through in the pits to get my throttle tightened up as it cracked loose and that simply wouldn't do. I rejoined the pack at the back and came up to seventh while Swordy won everything in sight.

My patience was tested the following week when in the fast lane of the M6 my Sprinter cut

out completely and put the fear of god in me as I tried to manoeuvre across to the hard shoulder. It was some electrical problem and we were towed by the AA to the local Merc service centre to get fixed up. I missed a day's practice over it all but went to Spain confident anyway for a good result.

My luck ran dry there too when on the first lap of the first race I got a rock in the mouth that knocked my front tooth completely out and split my top lip full open. I pushed my tooth in myself and the trackside doctor mended my lip with a few tidy stitches. I missed both races that day and scored zero points which now makes Japan an unlikely trip. I was so angry about it all as I had made a good start and was lying sixth at the time of the rock receiving.

I went to a dentist in Barcelona and got some temporary bond fixed to the loose tooth which has worked a treat for the meantime. I'll get it fixed properly by my own dentist once I'm home after Germany.

The next race in Portugal went well and I finished 12th and 13th. Each time I was mid-20s on the first lap so I spent the whole of the races passing guys and eating roost. Better starts would have been very welcome there.

The British championship moved to Matchams for the third round and I found myself passing and eating roost again. This time it wasn't my fault. Jordan Rose got all out of shape on the big sweeper on the first lap of the first race and I got completely wiped off my bike by his bike. Dead last to sixth was my race and in the second moto I got third. I was relieved to make the podium after being off it so far this year. Let's hope I visit the victory steps more often from now on.

On that note I'll have to get on with doing something to make the odds of that happening greater. Training and practising it is then!





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TEENAGE KICKS!

If you can't play nicely... Fresh out of the schoolie ranks, teenage hotshots Stephen Clarke and Ashley Greedy mix it up at round two of the U21s at Frome. Greedy won the opening round at a washed-out Whiteway but Clarke's form at Frome was good enough to give him the lead in the championship. With fast kids like this coming through to the adults – and let's not forget last year's U21 champ Tommy Searle – the future's looking rosy for British MX.

Photo by Toby Fuller



next MONTH

TANEL LEOK

Swordy's sidekick takes on the world

TONY CAIROLI

Can the MX2 king keep his crown?





CROCK STAR

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ON SALE

JUNE 9



DAVI '01



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WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS

ENDLESS SUMMER

BULGING ENTRIES AND EVENTS-A-PLENTY KEEP THE ACTION COMING THICK AND FAST OVER IN IRELAND

THE RANKS of the MRA/MCCNI have swollen this season as new victims have either caught the off-road bug or older gladiators have decided to return to racing. This, coupled with the surge of youth riders moving into the adult ranks, has resulted in too many riders wanting to race – in a way we are becoming a victim of our growing success. The way I see it is that there are too many Grade B and C riders while the Grade A gates will start to dwindle after the first few rounds.

Most sports have a promotion and relegation process but in motocross we only ever move riders up a grade. We should consider moving the top 10 or 15 up at the end of the season while the bottom five should be relegated down a grade. Without going too deep into the politics things are going to have to be addressed before next season as it is madness to try to accommodate every licence holder in Ireland on a national championship race day – so stop trying to do so.

Congratulations to the Mourne club on running another successful May Day meeting at Seaforde. The rain stayed away long enough for the sizeable crowd to enjoy the racing on a well prepared hillside track. Circuit owners Norman and Jimmy Green worked hard with the club to attract and sustain the loyal sponsors who once again raised the finance required to increase the prize fund. The MX1 and MX2 classes were split and to be honest that didn't make for great depth in the racing as riders were not allowed to race in both classes.

In the MX2 class it was pretty much the Philip McCullough show as the Moto-One/Intouch KTM boss gave a great display of riding hardpack. Against the mighty four-strokes Tommy Merton rode the wheels off his Rainey Bros 125cc Yamaha although he was always going to have to settle for the runner-up spot behind McC.

Three different winners in the MX1 class added a little excitement to the outcome. Wayne Garrett on the Moto-One KTM won the first outing and Robert Hamilton on the GOMX/Russell's Yamaha and Brian Steele aboard a WATT Motorcycles Kawasaki each stepped on to the top of the podium.

As the sun disappeared behind the clouds nobody was in any doubt that the rider of the day award belonged to Wayne Garrett. His ride through the field from last to second in the final MX1 moto was nothing short of magnificent – another few laps and Steeler may just have been pushed for the win.

Across the pond things for the local boys are holding up. Gordon is plugging away and every weekend growing his confidence. Some people

thought that GC could jump back into the game and win at British championship level – that was never going to be the case. The quality of riders is simply too good, these guys are dedicated athletes and are among some of the fastest riders in Europe. Crock has a game plan and he must stick to that which at times must be frustrating for him as it is not about a quick fix – it's the future that's important.

Martin Barr is not having fun at the GPs at the moment. If he could make the startgate for the race he would make points but qualification is about hanging it out for that one flying lap and that is another skill that the ever-smiling youngster is yet to conquer. Eighth in the British championship at present, Martin has shown that he has the pace to run towards the front of the pack and I can see him push a top four finish before long.

Further down the pecking order Robert Hamilton has consistently scored points in every round although poor qualification times are reducing his chances of gating well.

Ricky McKeown may have seen his run of bad luck come to an end. The GH Racing supported rider has been plagued with other riders' misfortunes so far this season – people falling in his path seems to be the norm. Despite crashing at Matchams, Rick scored a point and 14th in qualifying at Lyng proves speed is not in question – he just needs a break.

The Irish contingent in MX2 has been less fortunate. Both Adam McKee and Phillip McLaughlin are not yet making the grade in this competitive class. "The tracks are so different than what we race at home and the only way to learn is to keep racing over here," says Phillip who is determined to stay the pace and qualify as he did for the Hawkstone International.

Both the Ulster and Irish National championships are well under way with two rounds of the Ulster MX1 gone. At the top of the table Garrett and Hamilton are being chased by the old-school of Adam Lyons on the TAS Suzuki and McCullough. Lindsey Newell has made a big impression this season and the fast, stylish Moore Homes racer seems well capable of mixing it at the front – is a moto win on the cards?

Steven McCaughey leads the grade B series from Conor Bradley and Ryan Shanley who is making a comeback to racing after a few years in the pub! Round two of the Irish championship is in Cork so I better get packed!

Top o' the day to you...

Stevie



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JONTY'S BOX

WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE?

THREE YEARS AFTER SWEEPING CHANGES WERE INTRODUCED TO MAKE THE WEC AN EASIER SPORT FOR SPECTATORS TO UNDERSTAND, HAS THE SHAKE-UP MADE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE SERIES' POPULARITY?

THERE COMES a time when things need a changin'. Just like the set-up of your bike's suspension, your pre-season training routine or the film in your roll-off system – at some point in time world championship series need changing too. And at the start of '04 the World Enduro Championship was no exception.

In the case of the WEC, changes – or improvements as them what was making them preferred to call them – were made for several key reasons. Firstly, to modernise the series. Secondly, to give the championship a much needed professional identity. Thirdly, to make the sport easier for the general public to understand. Oh, and a little further down the 'things to do' list came improving facilities and the events themselves for those actually competing in them.

After many years of neglect the WEC was long overdue a facelift which was something that the FIM was all too aware of. Basically, the championship needed to smarten up its act or risk forever being known as the poor relation of the off-road motorcycling world.

Those changes took place in '04 after the sport's governing body awarded former European Supermoto Championship promoter Alain Blanchard and his company ABC Communications a three-year contract to manage the WEC's commercial rights. Having been little more than a collection of events joined only by the fact that they came together under the WEC umbrella up until that point, many viewed the appointment of a series promoter as unnecessary and with scepticism. Having done just fine – thank you very much – from '90 until '03 why, many asked, did the WEC need to be changed?

Changes came in the form of a radical class reshuffle – no longer would two-strokes and four-strokes compete separately. So as of the first round of the '04 championship the Enduro 1, Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 class format was introduced. At the same time 'hobby riders' that made up the majority of those competing in WEC events were basically told that they were no longer welcome in the WEC.

With the FIM and ABC Communications wanting the WEC to be a 'professionals only' championship the riders that had for so long been the backbone of the championship were suddenly made to feel like second class citizens, banished firstly to 'B' paddocks and then politely and indirectly told to **** off and compete in the European Enduro Championship. Having made events financially viable for clubs since the start of the WEC in '90 the great unwashed were suddenly the great unwanted.

As well as re-structuring the classes and wanting to cap the number of riders competing in events, getting the WEC on TV was a must. Days were made shorter, podium celebrations and press conferences were introduced and extreme special tests became mandatory. The new look WEC was going to boost the series' popularity with the general public

and TV audiences all over the world.

So after nearly three years in charge of the WEC have the changes introduced by the FIM and Alain Blanchard made the world championship a better place? Well, yes and no. Despite a claimed – and massively optimistic – 200,000 spectators having come out to watch last year's nine-round championship the harsh reality is that there are no more spectators standing in fields or forests across Europe now than there were three, five or, I would imagine, 10 years ago. And there are a couple of reasons why this is the case.

The simplifying of the WEC didn't really go far enough. Five classes reduced to three, which has been increased back to four now that hobby riders have been welcomed back under the guise of the Enduro Junior class, hardly makes 'the motorcycling equivalent of car rallying' any easier for Xavier Johansson to understand now does it?

One class – in which the world's best enduro riders could compete head-to-head against each other – might just do that. Salminen versus Knight versus Aro versus Cervantes versus Merriman on any size of bike they chose would not only be simpler but much, much more exciting.

But the main reason why the WEC hasn't seen an explosion in popularity with spectators is because enduros – like countless other niche sports – only really appeal to those that already have a genuine interest in the sport. Only those with a serious understanding and passion for enduros will travel up a mountain to catch a fleeting glimpse of their favourite rider as he blasts past once every two hours.

While motocross can offer a structured, easy to understand, action-packed day's entertainment, enduro can't. It never did and it never will do. Enduro above everything else is a sport for those competing in it and not one that will ever really interest the casual observer. Needing to be prepared to get up early, brave all weathers, stand in often muddy fields or dusty forests and continuously get in and out of your car as you follow the action, no matter what is done to change the sport of enduro I feel it will never appeal to Joe Public.

But no real increase in the number of spectators coming out to watch WEC events isn't necessarily a bad thing for the championship. During the past three years world championship events have – after some fraught moments between riders and Blanchard – become, on the whole, better.

With fewer problems with the courses and the majority of special tests – thanks to the introduction of former world champion Giovanni Sala as the official course inspector – the WEC is generally a better championship than it was three years ago. While changing the sport in the hope of attracting more spectators hasn't really worked it has made the series better for those competing in it. Which was pretty much all the series needed in the first place...

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GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? Well here's where you should be saying it...

Forced Break!

As a motocross lover I've followed the sport for years with a bit of racing here and there but this year I decided to get myself a newish CR, some new gear and a personal transponder for the season ahead.

While racing at Easter I was going good until the last race when I found the CR starting to miss a bit (later to find out I forgot to fill up with petrol) and I ended up stopping on a fast corner. Before I knew what had happened another bike came around the bend and hit my leg putting him over the bars and sending me to hospital for four days with two trips to the theatre thrown in as an added bonus!

All I can do now is admire my lonely CR and read up on my motocross fitness in my collection of DBR mags for the next eight weeks.

I'm thinking on buying some knee braces and was wondering what is the best buy on a £400 to £500 budget. Also, if you've got any tips on staying fit with a broken ankle so I'm ready to go again when my leg is right I'd be most grateful.

The Spain Off Road feature was brilliant in April's edition and I'm looking forward to going there in the coming year. Cheers!

Andrew, via email

If you can stretch your budget a little further we'd definitely recommend you buy some CTi Morph braces from Technology in Motion – give Darren a call on **0208 944 9919** and he'll hopefully hook you up.

For fitness tips it's always worth checking our MX Medic's website www.mxfitness.co.uk where you'll find a healthy (groan!) amount of information!

Now for some bad news about Spain Off Road. Due to unforeseen circumstances they've had to put a premature end to their quad tours which is a shame as the owners are good people who provided a great service. We wish them and you all the best for the future!

Maxxis Mockery!

I was checking the programme from the first British championship round and there are at least three riders riding who wouldn't even win a fixed raffle and are taking the **** for even being there.

Then if you look at the qualification times for MX1 – check them on mylaps.com – you'll see there is one rider who is 31 seconds-a-lap slower than the last qualifier – that means he's 50 seconds slower than the fastest man Ken De Dycker. Call me an idiot but how many true 'experts' are that slow – are they giving Expert grading points away in some centres?

And what happened to the clubman's/qualifying championship? When riders had to progress to the British from that championship the field was certainly much stronger. Now it seems like any muppet with a licence can just pay a fat registration fee to the ACU and become a British championship rider – bring back the clubman's and bring back good racing right through the pack!

Mr Angry, via email

We checked out the times from the first three rounds and also the majority of the 2005 season and, yeah, there are one or two riders who seem to be entering these events who aren't quite ready for the big leagues just yet. We then tried to contact the ACU to find out what the prerequisite is for getting a spot in the British championships but they ignored our emails and answer-phone messages – maybe they were too busy counting the registration fees to get back to us?

Girl Power!

My name is Tia and I ride a KX80 – my favourite MX rider is Tom Church. I would just like to say I love motocross and I also love your magazine. I started motocross a year ago and I can't get enough of it!

Personally I think it's the best sport going



Future Champ?

I'm called David, I'm 11 years old and I love reading your magazine – it's the best motocross magazine about! I really like motocross and my favourite part of your magazine is Rage. I have a Yamaha PW80 which I think is a really cool bike, I love riding it and when I am older I would like to be a champion motocross rider and maybe even be on the cover of DBR one day.

David, Manchester

The PW80 is a really cool bike and many of today's champions started out on that very same model. With that in mind we've reserved the cover of the April 2015 copy for you so you'd best get putting in some laps, ride fast and become a champion. Good luck with your future career!

and more people should join in (especially girls). Also I really like how you involve youth riders in your magazine.

Tia, via email.

We think it would be great if more people – especially girls – got involved with the sport. If everyone keeps on spreading the word about how great a pastime it is maybe one day motocross will be as popular as soccer or golf. Obviously, we're aware that it probably won't happen but we can keep on trying anyway...

Spine Shocker!

Last night I was just browsing through past issues of DBR and I put all of last year's in order to find a decent picture of the beautiful Tiffany on the binder part. Then I put together the '06 issues and so far I'm undecided as to who owns the ugly mug that graces the binder this year – it looks like a gorilla of some kind, I think it goes by the name of Suttly!

Lads, come on, you've gone from Tiff to that thing – talk about letting the standards drop!

Conor, via email

*The picture on the binder part (or spine as we like to call it in the business) was actually meant to be Tiff looking utterly splendid on a glamorous night out ooop naaarth. Unfortunately, Tanky was so drunk when he took it he was holding the camera the wrong way around – useless fat b****d! Remember kids, drinking alcohol isn't cool and neither is Suttly so don't try and emulate his actions or his haircut!*

Drink Dufus!

Where can I buy a can of that SuttDawg energy drink from? I checked your website and it's not there and my local shop doesn't have any either. I really need to taste the Dawg.

Rick, Hest Bank

Sorry Richard, it's all sold out. Sucker!



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With the British GP right around the corner now is the time to choose your favourite rider and think about what you're gonna do to help will them to the wictory (if you're from Ireland!)

If it's Tommy Searle or Tyla Rattray who's your top-ripper of choice then you're in with a bit of luck as Onfire have just released these fan-tastic tees that have both the name and race number of Tommy and Tyla so you can support your superhero scrambly-bike scorcher in style!

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Durable and stylish are two words that would substantially do the job when it comes to describing the new – to the UK at least – range of Doxo graphics. The graphic kits use the very best in 3M(r) adhesives and they're printed on 20mil PVC vinyl using UV resistant ink so we reckon the Doxo brand should be sticking around (groan) in the competitive graphics market for a long time to come.

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ROLL ON THROTTLE

FAST RESPONSE THROTTLE

If Mr Miyagi was a demon dirt-biker he'd know all about the importance of quick roll-on and roll-off but unfortunately he's not a demon dirt-biker – he's a kung-fu fighter – so if he could just keep his nose out of this subject we'd be most grateful. That's right old man – shush!

So filling Mr Miyagi's shoes (do kung-fu fighters even wear shoes?) on this subject of fast throttles is the Roll On Throttle company who specialise in speedy throttle action thanks to their patent applied for guaranteed-against-breakage throttle tubes with varying cams which alter the amount of pull your cables receive when you whack open the throttle.

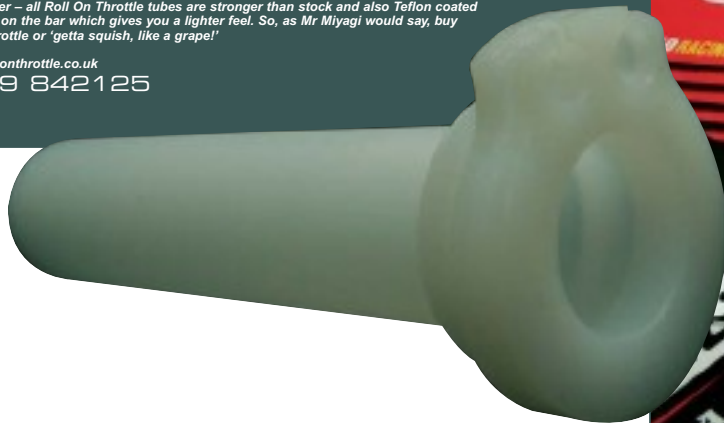
The throttle tube pictured here – the Fast model – goes from fully-off to fully-on 11 per cent quicker than the stocker (that's 60 degrees of rotation as opposed to 67) and there's also a Lightning model which is 18 per cent quicker. If fast action's not your thing then the Roll On tube – which offers better control in the early part of the action before being eight per cent quicker in the final half – could be for you.

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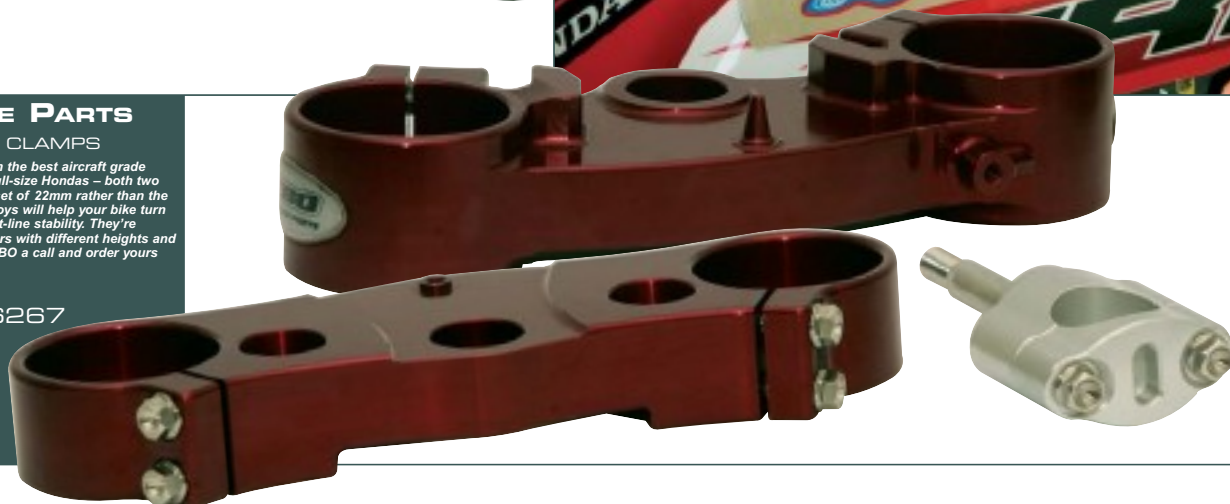
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HERO OR VILLAIN?

Opinionated, uncompromising, out-spoken - and outrageously frikkin' fast! Whether you love him or hate him, you can't ignore Billy MacKenzie...and that's kinda what he's all about

Words by Jonathan Beniman Photos by Redeye

AFTER TWO days with Billy Mac we're still undecided. Is he good or is he bad? And we mean that in a personal as well as a professional sense. If ever a man was possessed - taunted by his demons and angels - then Billy Mac is that man. But what makes Billy bad makes him good. It's quite possible to love and hate Billy at the same time.

He's a gifted racer, only fighting what seem ever-recurring flaws. And he's cool company, only every now and again he gets a wee bit 'tight' to use his phraseology. And you get this feeling, deep down, that you wouldn't like to see his anger. He is indeed a man of many parts is Billy Mac.

Driving along in his new Vivaro van, a nice little perk from sponsor JDS Van Sales, Billy is happy. He's at the wheel and he likes it that way. He's in charge. Whether he's around the house, around the paddock or in a race, a Billy-In-Charge is a happy Billy. Only don't take that as a negative, he's no control freak - it's simply a matter of carving his own destiny. Billy Mac is not one of life's passengers.

Part of this attitude is a 'work hard, play hard' ethic. Yesterday morning he was sweating it out in the gym - just one day back after the Portuguese GP - and in the afternoon his training comprised no less than three 40-minute practice motos. And today he's going play

riding, only there'll be nothing cruisey about that either.

"Well I try not to make it work," says Billy, "because as soon as it becomes work you don't enjoy it, that's when you don't get the best out of yourself. I'd like to be like Valentino Rossi - he enjoys it all the time. But I know motocross is different to road racing and each rider has to work hard. And the hard work is done in the winter, when you are sweating the hours in the gym, feeling bad all the time and there's a lot of pressure. But you have to do that so when the season comes you can enjoy it, so you can keep a routine during the week and you'll get the best out of yourself every weekend."

BILLY AND STEVE

Together forever?

"Sometimes I sit back and I wonder, I see these people changing teams every year and I wonder what it would be like. But for me it's not something I think about. I've been with Dixon Yamaha seven years and it's fine. Steve's is the best UK-based GP team and there's no reason to change.

"Steve's never ever pressured me. He's seen me as something that's evolving and it wasn't really until last year when I started getting the good results and he's been paying me a bit more that he's been putting the pressure on.

"So if I do get poor results like Portugal he asks why and what do we have to do to fix this. But it's a good

relationship, I can talk with him about anything.

"Thing is with Steve is that he sits back and takes everything in – doesn't say a lot but he takes everything in and does it in his own way. Even when pissed off he finds a constructive way to say what he has to. And he loves it. He often wants to do more. He often nicks the pitboard off Ben when he sees I'm having a crap race. We laugh about it because I know what he's like having known him so long. And the thing is I don't look at the pitboard – because I know Steve always grabs it. But he knows too – when he was doing the commentary on Mediazone he said that I never read the board anyway!"

A Kings of Leon track comes over the van's ICE unit and Billy does air guitar, steering the van with his knees. It's a reminder that despite seven years of championship level motocross he's still only just 22. His demeanour is borderline reckless and he clearly likes it that way and if it makes certain people nervous then he likes it even more. But in that Good Billy Bad Billy sense he's also very observant and when he likes something or somebody he's not afraid to say it (and vice versa, of course).

His current on-track nemesis is Carl Nunn who beat him to the British MX2 title last year. Previously he's been beaten to the championship by fellow Scot Stephen Sword and of the Kawasaki flier Billy confirms there's not much he'd like to say so best say nothing at

all. "Next subject." But Nunny elicits a far warmer appreciation.

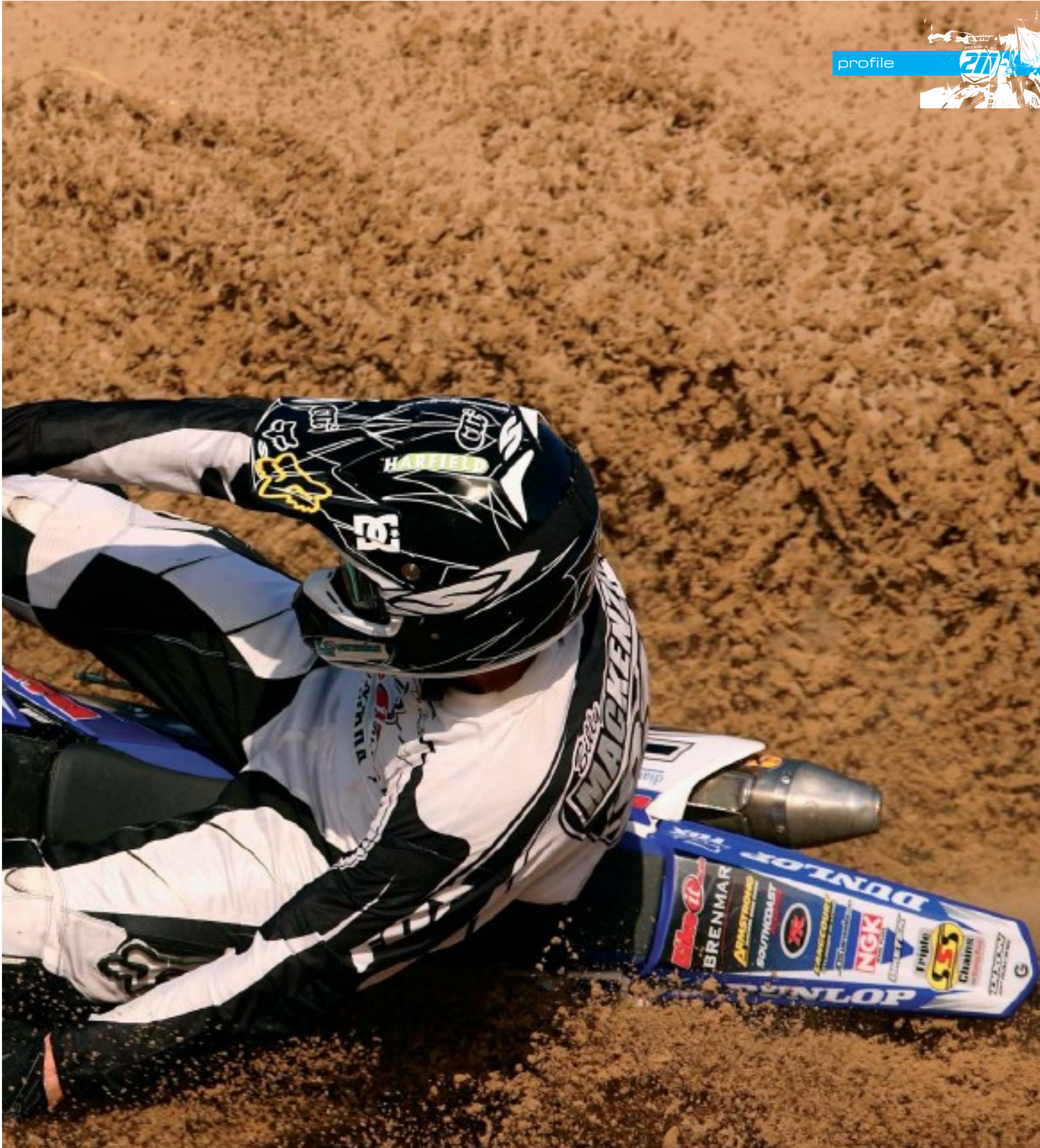
"I really enjoy the rivalry with Carl and I think he does too. With Swordy, well, we didn't get on. But Carl, he really likes to race and as well as enjoying racing him I like him as a person as well. I think the British fans, because of this mutual respect, follow the both of us and cheer us both on and so it's making a cool atmosphere.

"Last year, after everyone thinking negative things of Carl, he showed his dedication, application and fitness. And he really showed that in a couple of races last year where I took it to him and I expected him to give up but he's a racer and always will be – he's quite clever, older and more naturally talented than me. So I

think that helped him last year. He was certainly cleverer, raced the season not just the races.

"But the rivalry has helped us. I think we both go fast and both know the tracks and so we've both pushed each other for the British and the world championships, it has been a big training thing. Last year we both won GP races. Carl hadn't done that for a few years and I've never done that before so I think the British races helped."

But Billy's observations lead off-track as well. He respects Nunny for more than just his racing. "Nunny I think has a lot of fun, with his racing and his family – he's leading a real cool life. He's incredibly talented as a racer and yet he's family orientated – wife, kid and all, so comfortable. For me I'm everything motocross,



my friends are motocross, my work is motocross, I have to be motocross, motocross, motocross, it's how I live my life at the moment. But sometimes I get quite jealous of the likes of Carl who are happy doing their own thing."

Back in real time the talk of Nunny, the family man, has mellowed Billy. The van's speed has dropped from borderline illegal (that's the other side, not this side, of the borderline) to a rather more leisurely pace. In the mirrors I can see Jason Dougan has caught us up in his blinged VW ride and even photographer Redeye in his own not-so-quite-blinged VW (once tagged 'Driving Miss Daisy') is coming into view. David Gray has replaced the Leon lot on what us older dudes used to call a stereo.

If Billy ever fancied fatherhood he'd probably

do a good job of it. For today's play ride he's actually sourced two spare bikes for us journos (even if one is a minibike) and he was ready well ahead of time. He'd organised the day and we'll find later when Redeye and myself will be scratching around for some grub it'll be Billy Mac holding open the bag of snacks. Perhaps sensing this uncomfortably 'regular guy' thing coming over him, Billy flicks through a few music tracks and finds something a little more hardcore. The attitude returns.

It's worth getting serious with the lad then. We discuss the business of motocross. In a world full of conflicts, he recognises the conflicting duality in motocross that requires the athlete to convey a chilled persona and yet have to train like a bastard, be so focussed that

nothing else matters – and to accept nothing less than victory. He understands too that what makes him personally strong as an MX2 pilot is also his biggest weakness. Billy wins because he is the biggest (somewhere north of 12 stone), the most aggressive and because in his head he believes – no, knows – that he can do it. He loses for the same reasons.

His last race at the time of the interview was Portugal. It hadn't been a good weekend, although a 7-6 scorecard at least netted enough points to keep him well up in the world championship chase. Asked to analyse his result he was honest.

"I rode so bad, I didn't feel confident in the bike and I was having a lot of problems in these off-cambered corners. I knew exactly what I



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had to do in my mind but I just couldn't do it. I was having suspension problems – which I've had so many times this year – but it's kind of my fault because we worked a lot at them earlier this year. But I don't know, as fast as I'm getting them sorted the more I need to refine them some more. I think maybe the suspension was too soft at the weekend and in most of the corners I wasn't able to put the front where I wanted to or it wasn't doing what I wanted it to. I've got no problem within myself, I know that I can do that speed, I just wasn't able to with the bike."

Mentioning that maybe his problem could have been the front tyre – it sounds so symptomatic – elicits one of those knowing, slightly exasperated shrugs. Yeah, he tried some different fronts. He's not stupid. But Billy is keen to explain he's ahead in other ways.

"Same time last year in Portugal I was behind Bossiere and I was getting really annoyed and tried a desperate pass and fell down and dropped to 10th. I wanted to go for

the win. I could see Cairoli getting away, it was early in the race but I rushed it and ended up 10th – it's those things that I take into my mind now. I'm a bit more mature. I can see that as the race goes on and with the pitboards and knowledge of lap times I know how the race will pan out. So I'm taking a more mature look at it.

"I'm seventh in the championship and I've already been more consistent than this time last year with only one non-scoring race – the first race of the year, which I was pretty tight about. So as long as I keep scoring points every race and start picking up my game, getting my speed back – well, there's still a long season ahead and there are people out there who will have DNFs as well as me. There are times when you can't win and then you have to settle for the points. And that's what I'm doing at the moment, getting decent top-10s every week and as soon as I can get off that start and get up front then I'm sure I can win a few races too."

So right now he's riding the bike at what he calls his 'happy' pace, where's he's fast but not

devastating. We take the analysis deeper. Okay, he's happy but he's not happy – he's getting top-10s but we all know that top-10s don't win titles. So the bike's not perfect but whose bike ever is? And if only he could get those starts...



"I need to improve my starts, yeah," says Billy, almost sheepish. "And I need to improve my qualifying. But all this comes from the hard work we have to do in the week, it's not all Hollywood stuff. If we've had a bad weekend then we've clearly had a problem and so we have to analyse, then identify the problem, organise tests, get people in, do the training – whatever it takes, get everything so we go to the next race fully sorted. With the best package."

They teach this old spiel in Racer 101





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don't they? Come on Billy, tell it like it is...

"Okay. It's not the race, that's okay for me. It IS the qualifying, you need to get a lap time to get the pick of the gate for that qualifying race and for that I seem to be really bad, so it's uphill. So for me to get a top-10 pick of startgate is good."

Only it's not good, is it? We've already established top-10 isn't enough. You need top-three. And to finish top-three you need to start top-three don't you?

"There are a lot of kids out there who can put in really fast laps but they can't last a race so I don't see it as a big problem. But I do need to improve it. But I try not to worry about it because I can come good in the race. But it is the one thing I do have to work on."

We listened to the tape of the interview again after our day. And again. Billy's demons and angels must live hand-in-hand. In one sentence Billy fully acknowledges he has a problem. Then in the next he says but it isn't really a big problem. Then he says it is again. But don't worry, "I can come good in the race" – yeah Billy and come seventh. We don't want seventh – we want you to win.

So can Billy consistently win in GPs and make champion? Well, to recap here's his problem, as he discussed with us. First he loves rough tracks. Brings out the man in him. Rougher it gets the better he goes. Only quali takes place early in the weekend when the track

is still quite flat. Not Billy's favourite track condition – and one clearly 'the kids' revel in. So he qualifies badly and gets a poor pick for the qualifying race but at least muscles his way through to a qualifying position for the main. But because he was, say, sixth in his qualifier he again gets a poor pick of gate for the main and so has to muscle his way again. All the time the Cairois and Rattrays are having it easy way out front. They don't even see Billy Mac.

Oh, and when it comes to the starts, remember his weight. How does a 12-stone titan beat a nine-stone midget in a drag race on like-for-like machinery? From an outside gate? He can't.

It's something that's not lost on Billy. "Yeah, the engine's as fast as we can make it. I'll have to start shedding pounds to go any faster. I'm a good 12-stone plus but I can't lose weight now without losing energy, I'm at my fighting weight, I'm pretty thin as it is. And yes, you need to get the inside gate, get the qualifiers. Then as a big guy you stand a chance."

We arrive at our play ride venue and Billy does his stuff. Doogs and Martin Barr are with us too. Billy distinguishes himself by his intensity. When he says he likes to play hard he means it. He approaches every photoshoot with a 40-minute top-speed moto attitude. For every set piece Billy makes a circuit which he circulates with almost ferocious intensity (that word again). Some riders see photoshoots as

opportunities to showboat. With Billy it's not like that. If there was a record for riders who hit berms the hardest, who dragged their bars the deepest, who nailed the big jump in the highest gear, who burst their lungs ploughing through the deepest sand, then Billy wants it. But not for any vainglory, just for himself. He wants to be that double-hard for himself.

When the day ends it's not because Billy is tired but because there is no more – no more fuel for his bike, no more sun to light the dunes. Billy has sweated, he's probably hurt a few times but he's rock hard to the end. If you offered him the choice of running home or driving you'd kind of bet on him choosing the run.

And so do we like him? Some of us do. Some of us don't. Did we feel any different about him after two days in his company? Yes. We didn't like him any more, nor did we dislike him any more. What we did find was that we respected him more. It's easy for older guys to forget what it is to be young. What it is to see everything for the first time. And, instinctively, to want to do it all for yourself. To want to prove yourself. This is Billy Mac.

Yet he's also increasingly understanding that learning doesn't just have to be purely by personal experience. There are other resources and they can make you stronger. So Billy Mac is increasing his arsenal, tooling up, growing in strength. Growing wiser...

Tarres shows that he's lost none of the skills that earned him seven world titles

The chance to test a full-factory Montesa/HRC Cota 4RT is just too good to pass up – especially when we've got Jordi Tarres doing the testing

Words and photos by G2F

FACTORY FOURPLAY!

OUTSIDE OF being invited to the Beckham's wedding, invitations don't come a lot bigger than being on the guest list to ride a full-factory-spec HRC machine. So when the guys from the Repsol Montesa HRC trials team offered us the chance to test both Lampkin's and Fujinami's factory bikes there was no diary checking needed.

Following a few quick phone calls and the promise of a lifetime subscription to DBR we recruited the services of none other than trials legend and seven-time world champion Jordi Tarres to swing his leg over these two very special trials irons.

Trials might not be the biggest sport in the world but it's the only official HRC racing project in two-wheel motorsport other than Honda's mighty MotoGP effort. Not since the Thorpe, Malherbe and Geboers era has off-road motorcycling been blessed with proper – and we mean proper – hand-made and certainly priceless full-factory HRC bikes.

Nudged by the FIM, who later opted for a u-turn on their four-stroke only policy, Honda/Montesa took the decision to scrap their two-stroke trials bikes and embarked on a lone four-banger crusade as the other smaller trials manufacturers gave an almost unanimous v-sign to the world governing body's directive.

With the FIM realising that the expense of developing a four-stroke was maybe a step too far for the specialist European trials bike makers – and with the real threat of a world championship boycott by the same parties – they reversed their policy. However, Honda/Montesa were too far down the line to stop their top secret and revolutionary Cota 4RT project

and pushed ahead regardless. With this in mind, many in the paddock expected the FIM to restrict/reduce the capacity of the two-strokes in a similar way to MX to at least give perhaps the championship's most important and prestigious team a fighting chance. To date this remains NOT the case.

In terms of global trials bike sales, the sheer scale of the cost of the Cota 4RT project can not be justified – but the millions of Yen that has been and continues to be spent is not just about developing a new trials bike as it includes ground-breaking technology that will eventually be used throughout Honda's massive ranges. Confirming this point, just last month some of the Japanese manufacturers (Honda included) broke cover with their future fuel-injected MX models.

The batteryless, self-powered fuel injection system for which the Montesa Cota 4RT has been used as a test bed was a world first and something the mighty Wing was proud of. Knowing that their rivals would steal and copy their idea once it was shown in the public domain, Honda took the almost unheard of decision to develop and launch the production model before proving it as a 'racing' prototype in order to protect their large investment. So much focus was given to delivering a faultless customer model that the initial factory bikes suffered as priority was given to achieving showroom rather than championship glory. The outstanding reliability and performance of the production bikes confirms that this was time and effort well spent.

Despite the late arrival of the first full-factory bikes, Dougie Lampkin gave the Montesa





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Wayne Braybrook flew over to help with the test!



Jordi felt he had to adapt his style to suit the four-stroke



Cota 4RT a dream debut by winning the opening round of the 2005 outdoor world championship. This came nearly 20 years after Steve Saunders recorded the last four-stroke victory at this level (also achieved on a factory Honda). While Fujinami and Lampkin had to settle for second and third place in the championship at the end of the year – behind the two-stroke Gas Gas of Adam Raga – the season saw the four-stroke improve greatly and emerge as a real title contender.

Having endured another difficult indoor campaign, with the development four-stroke still unable to match the proven two-strokes over the severe artificial sections, the Repsol Montesa HRC team were glad to move outside. With Lampkin and Fujinami given new spec bikes ready for the start of the outdoor season, a handful of specialist magazines from around the world were invited to test the bikes that the Montesa duo had used for last year's world championship proper and the indoor series that has just passed.

Much debate surrounded allowing Tarres to ride the factory Montesas given his long and close association with rival manufacturer Gas Gas. But after several emails between Spain and Japan the big boss from HRC gave the go-ahead for Jordi to ride the two works Cotas prior to them being crushed in order to prevent them falling into the wrong hands now that they have been retired from the world stage.

The test venue is about an hour north of Barcelona at a small town called Navas on the side of the highway that leads from the Catalan capital to the principality of Andorra. The Montesa team have a small workshop facility here where they conduct most of their testing. While the location lacks variety it doesn't lack severity with a good scattering of massive boulders on a dry, dusty and steep hillside.

Watching Tarres in action – even on unfamiliar machinery – was a real treat. The master's lost none of his magic and looked just as technical and majestic as he did back in the day when he was the king of world trials. Little else happens when Jordi rides and everyone stopped and admired Tarres as he flicked the Cota on line before attacking a series of steps, hardly bringing the four-stroke off tickover as he remained typically feet up.

Removing his helmet, Jordi thought long and hard before he began to share his factory four-stroke experience. "Until now all I knew about the bike was from watching it and listening to it. From that my expectation and impression was that the engine would be similar to a four-stroke enduro or MX bike as the sound is quite loud.

"However, when you ride the bike it is completely different and the truth about the engine is completely opposite to what you expect. For me the bike is not powerful at all. I do not know why that is, maybe that is the maximum power they can achieve or maybe it is set like that for another reason.

"I think what is totally clear is that with a two-stroke you can express your riding style and make the bike work how it best suits your style but with the four-stroke I think you have to adapt your style to suit the bike. Because of this I think you must have to ride the bike for a long period of time before you can understand it fully or begin to get the best from it.

"Having watched and spoken to Lampkin he has confirmed this point and told me that it was like learning to ride trials from the start all over again. Now I have tested the bike I can fully appreciate his comment and the way that he rides the bike which is different to how he used to ride his two-stroke.

"Because of the soft power you have to ride everything much slower. It is difficult to

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Tarres rates the bike as a 'great feat of engineering'



Spot the difference!

Dougie Vs Fujigas

Close inspection of the hand-welded aluminium frames, magnesium central crankcases, the mass of micro wires that lead to the fully mapable ignition and the many machined billet components confirmed that these two bikes were the real deal. Apart from the narrower handlebars, the grips with end plugs and his name on the tank, it's difficult to distinguish any major differences between Fujinami's bike and that of Lampkin that is lined up alongside it.

However, we grabbed the team's chief technician Oscar Giro so that he could explain just how the bikes differ to cope with the dramatically different riding styles of the two riders.

"The bikes are basically the same but have two completely different set-ups to allow for the difference in the riders' height, weight and the way they use the power. Fujinami's chassis is based very much on the production bike, as he prefers it, although he has tested other configurations including that used by Dougie.

"With Lampkin's bike the frame is very different with an altered head angle to give the bike more stability. He also uses shorter front frame tubes to lift the engine higher for more ground clearance. Because of his height he has his footrests set further back and a little lower.

"There is also a big difference in their suspension. Lampkin has his rear suspension much harder than Fujinami and also with a quicker action. Fuji runs his rear shock much softer and slower but with a higher ride height. Lampkin likes to have his lower in order to have more grip at the rear wheel.

"Both riders have different internal gear ratios and have their clutches set up in totally different ways. Lampkin's engine is probably slightly more powerful to counteract his weight, although when you hear them working you would normally assume that Fujigas has the most power.

"We are using the same system to map the throttle and power delivery as MotoGP so each rider can choose their own settings. On the bikes we are testing here it is possible to have two different settings which can be changed by the rider using the switch mounted on the handlebar. This can be changed at anytime and can store a dry setting and wet setting if the riders want to use it in this way.

"The electronics and the fuel injection system are the most important part of the bike and this is something we are continuing to work with. With the new bike it will be possible to give the rider a bigger choice of settings which can now be changed remotely by the mechanic using a Bluetooth module and a wireless enabled laptop computer.

"We have made good progress during the first year with the new four-stroke – not massive changes but refinement and a better understanding of what we are working with. The big things we are working on now is reducing the weight of the bike and improving the power. I think with these improvements we now have the opportunity to win the world championship."

approach anything with speed as if you lose momentum it is difficult to regain it again. I think the bike is very good at making some things – perhaps easier than the two-stroke in places – but if you make a mistake on the four-stroke it is difficult to recover.

"I think because of the soft power and the slow speed the suspension is incredibly soft and again very slow. I am not saying this is bad or does not suit the bike but is much different to any other world championship bike I have ridden.

"Overall the balance and the working of the bike are as you would expect of Honda and Montesa. The movement of the controls and suspension is incredibly smooth and precise. The bike is a great feat of engineering and although it is already a challenger for the world championship it is sure to produce an even

stronger fight in the future if it continues to develop at the same pace as it has done over the last year.

"I think it's true to say only Honda/Montesa is in a position to produce a four-stroke trials bike at this high level at this moment. For the rest they can only watch and learn at this time."

While no amount of money will buy you one of these factory bikes, for just less than five grand you can buy the next best thing in the form of a Montesa Cota 4RT Repsol replica. This limited edition model comes complete with a programmable throttle body so you can at least pretend that you're a works rider!

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SLICK SHIFTER?

Is DEP's new performance product – the Quickshift – really as good as the hype would have us believe?

Words by Chris Hammal Photos by Toby Fuller



DEP ARE already well known for making high performance aftermarket exhaust pipes which they've been doing for some time now. More recently they also launched an awesome door bell that every motocross fan should own so when I heard they were bringing out the Quickshift – an electronic system that helps you change gear – it had to be worth throwing on the old leathers and putting in some laps to try it out!

Assisted gear change has been around for a while in the road race scene but it has never been as technically advanced as the DEP Quickshift unit due to using mechanical parts only. And even though it's a hugely successful system it's never made the transition over to motocross – mainly because of all the beating and forces exerted on a MX bike, causing it to change gear when you don't want it to.

DEP have got over these problems by using a gauge that's laminated to the lever measuring the force. When the resultant torque exceeds a predetermined sensitivity the engine is cut for just long enough to allow for a full and smooth gear change without the use of clutch or shutting off the throttle.

To put that into a more simplistic motocross term you can keep the throttle pinned as you hook your foot under the gear lever and as you change up a little black box senses the movement and kills the engine through the kill switch circuit for a split second – actually milliseconds – taking the tension out of the engine and gearbox and allowing for a smooth gear change without any resistance.

The advantage to this is more life expectancy on the gearbox and by not using the clutch that puppy should last longer too!

And you can keep your whole hand on the handlebars giving you better grip, better stability and less chance of armpump which can only be a good thing.

Fitting the Quickshift is relatively simple as all electrical workings and the battery are contained in a small black box. To fit the beast you take off your existing gear lever and replace it with the Quickshift lever, then mount the little box out the way – under the tank or in the airbox is probably best – making sure the wires are routed so they won't snag. Then connect the wire coming out of the blackbox to the kill switch cable and you're ready to go.

Seeing as there are a lot of different bikes with a lot of different gearboxes out there those clever people at DEP developed the Quickshift with 10 settings for sensitivity and 10 settings for the kill time and they come set up for

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the specific bike you have – sweet!

The sensitivity setting enables the user to adjust the amount of force needed on the gear lever to change gear. To adjust the sensitivity you need to remove the four screws and take the front from the black box, then to view the current sensitivity simply press and release the sensitivity button and the sensitivity LED will flash a number of times – one flash represents a sensitivity of one, two flashes for a sensitivity of two etc. The lower the number the more sensitive the lever is.

To notch her up one or two levels press and release the sensitivity button to activate it then immediately press and hold the sensitivity button until the LED comes on and stays on, this has incremented the sensitivity by one setting. Now it's time to test it by putting in some laps but you gotta make sure not to set it too low because it could kill the motor when you don't want it to – like if you catch the shift lever in a rut.

Okay, let's move on to the kill time... The kill time is the amount of time that the Quickshift kills the engine, unloading the gearbox and allowing for a smooth gear change. The length of time that the engine is killed can be adjusted from 20 milliseconds up to 100 milliseconds.

These are such short amounts of time that you can't even notice it. Most motocross bikes designed for race use have a slick gearbox allowing for short kill times of around 50 milliseconds although, as we said, each steed has its own optimum setting – the RM125 is 70ms and the KXF450 was set at 30ms...capiche?

Adjusting the kill time is done in the same



quickshift



way as adjusting the sensitivity – by holding down the time button and so on – but don't worry, I won't bang on about how to do it again. Hope you're still reading and I haven't bored y'all too much so far...

Now for the best bit – riding the well equipped weapons! There was a good variation of bikes to get the full taste of the equipment ranging from a Yamaha YZ85 to a Honda CRF450F. Being a little stumpy and to reminisce on the good old days I high-tailed it to the Embo YZ85. To start with I struggled to get the hang of the bike but after a while I was away and I quickly found this was the bike to test the gear lever on – you had to change gear more often than MooCann cleans his teeth!

On this bike the Quickshift worked great even when this bike was screaming its tits off for the next gear. It hooked it up well and without any hesitation. Seeing as I could reach the ground on this tiny weapon I thought I'd try

some starts. The Quickshift didn't fail to impress and it worked great with just the slightest touch.

The next bike to go on was Jake Nicholls' Suzuki RM250F. On this bike it still worked well with each gear change but you had to put a little bit more force on to the gear lever which with a little tweaking could be made better.

The next bike was the Honda CRF450 and the Quickshift didn't seem to make much difference. I don't know if it needed more setting up or if it was just me being a helmet but, hey, this is a bike that you only need to change gear on twice-a-lap anyway.

So I gave that back and threw a leg over a nice new KTM 250F. The Quickshift worked great, the gear change was effortless and smooth and no matter which part of the track I was on it worked great. The biggest problem I had was trying not to use my clutch after all

these years of abusing it.

This is a great product and in race conditions it has got to help armpump because you don't need to be opening and clenching your hand using the clutch as much. And in sandy conditions – when you spend a lot of time standing up railing rough berms – it would make gear changing a lot smoother, helping you to keep your balance better.

Now for the sting in its tail – the price! At £257 for the whole thing and £120 for a replacement lever it's not cheap but if you're a serious racer or have just got too much money and you like your gadgets then it's well worth it. On the flip side if you've got a shafted gear box then it's not going to magically heal those problems so don't bother.

Next time you're down at your local bike shop it's probably worth spending your hard earned cash on a Quickshift instead of some blingtastic cosmetic parts.

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EASY DOES IT!

Looking for a hard-hitting, fire-breathing enduro monster? Then look somewhere else - the '06 Sherco 4.5i is a super-smoothy that'll leave you hungry for more...even after a full day in the saddle


Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttty

ANY MANUFACTURER coming into the trail and enduro market is always a welcome event so last year's launch of Sherco's enduro bike created a real buzz in the off-road scene. The French/Spanish company are obviously a big player in the trials market and the addition of

an enduro machine was a good move with the Sherco badge hinting at quality in both build and reliability.

Sherco have set out to refine their fuel injected enduro bike with the end goal to produce a machine that can be raced and ridden at all levels, straight from the crate. That seems to be the European way - these guys build a bike and go racing at world level with everything in absolute stock trim. Tremendous!

With the new 4.5i available to test and numerous refinements promised from the '05 model it was off to a very wet Tong Hall near Leeds to put the puppy through its paces...

The day was perfect for a test and so was the venue as there were some great ranges of conditions and terrain to test the motor and chassis to the max. 





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It may not be the fastest 450 thumper but you can still go wild in the woods thanks to super-smooth power delivery



The overall look of the bike is not really different to the previous model but as soon as you climb aboard the changes start to become apparent. There is a slightly more comfortable feel as you sit a little more into the bike – rather than on top of it – and the Paioli shock has been shortened, allowing the seat height to decrease by two-and-a-half centimetres. This gives the bike an altogether more user-friendly feeling which will appeal to a wider spectrum of riders and was to prove a great feature in the quality and comfort of ride as the day went on.

The handlebar position and the feeling from the controls is positive and precise as is expected of all modern bikes. Oversize and braceless handlebars are the unit of choice for the trail and enduro rider as they make life a tad easier on the rider by providing a little bit of flex while retaining great strength. This allows more time in the saddle with lesser levels of fatigue.

As soon as I snicked the Sherco into gear and rode off I could start to understand why it is good to refine an already solid bike, to reach for an even higher performance level. The bike simply felt great as I pulled away. The Sherco R&D people have done their homework and the changes to the motor were instantly noticeable.

The smoothness in this motor is pretty staggering. There is a delivery of smooth, tractable power from this motor which is ahead of any other bike I have tested. I think you could ride this bike in a full on trial. Now don't get me wrong, this motor is not the fastest – in fact it has an easy feel which could almost be mistaken as a slow feel – but the Sherco team have opted for an ease of ride rather than a fire-breather.

The electronic fuel injection system is revised with a completely new curve which clearly delivers the goods to the right place at the right time. New valves and a lighter flywheel compliment the fuel injection system to deliver an almost perfect power delivery with a minimum of fuss. On every type of going the bike would go about its business with no drama, using the smooth power to track along when I should have been getting in a bit of trouble with

my lack of skill on the day...

At this stage I have to say fair play to Sherco for getting the fuel injection system working so well on a stock bike. A lot of manufacturers are going to be using fuel injection systems soon and Sherco have been innovative in their desire to get it into production as early as possible.

The bike started easily with the electric boot every time and when hot it still fired easily with the button or the kickstart.

The chassis is a comfort zone and the only negative from the suspension is the same as almost every other Euro manufacturer in as much as the rear shock seemed to hit a bit of a hard spot in the middle of its stroke. The feeling appeared to come from the linkage rather than the shock itself and I think a slightly different rising rate could be used to give a more linear stroke through the linkage system. This small problem only raised its head a couple of times on faster sections when hitting kickers.

On the tight and technical going the bike as a package is really useable as, with a small flick of the throttle, the bike will ascend anything in its path – as long as the furry fellas are large enough to overcome the fear factor! The Sherco does like a challenge and I know it has the ability to get up just about any climb in any event. This really is a strong point to this bike.

The overall feel of the chassis is positive and that, combined with footpeg and handlebar positions that were comfortable in all situations, helps the Sherco provide a very balanced ride for long days on the trails. This really is a bike you can spend a lot of time on with no discomfort from rider positioning – everything feels just right and with the motor delivering the power in such a friendly fashion all Sherco owners are in for a treat.

Another new addition for '06 is the 5.1i. This bigger bore motor is pretty much the same as the 4.5i except for the use of a different cylinder, piston, crankshaft and con-rod. The 5.1i wasn't available to test on the day but it promises the same smooth power delivery with just a little added muscle and I'm sure it will be a great bike to ride.



Given Sherco's trials background it's no surprise that the 450 is capable of this kind of action

Specs

Bore and stroke:	94.5mm x 64mm
Front forks:	Paioli/Kayaba (295mm travel)
Rear shock:	Paioli (300mm travel)
Front brake:	270mm
Rear brake:	240mm
Seat height:	900mm
Wheelbase:	1485mm
Dry weight:	109kg



THE HARD WAY!

Third in last year's British MX2 championship, Wayne Smith's set his sights even higher for '06 – and he's aiming to get there without the benefit of a full season of GPs to pick up his speed

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttly

NUNNY, SWORDY, Billy Mac – motocross is a sport for nicknames and, if you're British, there's a good chance some bright spark will just dump a 'y' at the end of your surname. Hurrah! Instant nickname!

But one man who's so far resisted the temptation to acquire a media-friendly nickname – and, let's face it, there's one glaringly obvious option – is PAR Homes

Honda hotshot Wayne Smith.

Compared with some other riders with nicknames Wayne's pretty low-profile at the best of times – and if it wasn't for his speed, smooth style and solid finishes you could switch low-profile to no-profile.

The '01 British U21 champ, Wayne added a few more trinkets to his trophy cabinet last season. And by claiming the bronze medal in the '05 British MX2 championship and second in the domestic four-stroke series he showed that not only is he quick he's also versatile by jumping between 250 and 450Fs.

But as fast as he undoubtedly is, the 24-year-old Cumbrian keeps coming up against a brick wall in the MX2 series...

"I've had a second overall at a British championship round but I've never finished higher than third in a race. I've had third many times but I want to try and start winning races. I feel like I'm missing just that little bit to get on

the first couple of steps. It's frustrating but I'll work my arse off every single day to get there."

But as the riders he needs to beat to get that race win pick up their speed with regular GP appearances, Wayne's contract with the PAR Homes Honda team places the emphasis firmly on British events. So while Billy MacKenzie – who Wayne beat in the opening moto of the Brit champs round at Canada Heights – was racing to third at the Spanish GP, Wayne was trading wins with team-mate Mark Jones at Frome at the second round of the British thumper championship.

"Doing GPs does draw you on – I know it pulls me on and would get me to that next level," admits Wayne who narrowly missed scoring points both times out at the opening GP of the season. "I see myself as a GP rider and want to get back into them, whether it's next year or the year after."





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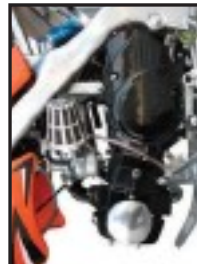
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Wayne heads to third in the opening moto at Canada Heights to equal his best Brit champs race result



With his team on the reserve list for Zolder, Wayne only got the call to go to Belgium on the Tuesday evening before the event when a space in MX2 became vacant. He was on the road by Wednesday morning.

"You step up your speed without noticing it – you see the guys who are doing grands prix and the guys who aren't and towards the middle of the season there's a gap. I don't want to be in the next group, I want to be up there with Carl and Tommy and people like that who are doing the business. At the end of the day my racing is my life, I put my heart and soul into it and I want to do the best I possibly can."

So why would Wayne, a rider with obvious world championship aspirations, sign for a team that couldn't automatically offer him a shot at a full GP season? For the answer we need to go

back to the beginning of 2005 when his Chambers Honda team dramatically folded.

"With the Chambers set-up it was the middle of January and I had to come up with something. Paul Rowlands [PAR Homes Honda team owner – SL] was mega to set me up with what he did and to be honest last year was one of the best years I've ever had. From starting out as the worst year possible it turned into one of my best seasons."

After the shock of finding himself without a team – and then the relief of a last-minute berth on a team he was happy with – Wayne was keen to sign up for '06 early on in the '05 season.

"For me with everything that had happened it was a comfort knowing I'd got my deal sorted and had nothing to worry about."

Wayne had been lined up for a full season of GPs with Chambers in '04 but injuries restricted his starts and he ended the year back in 50th with just four points to his name. But '05 was a different story and despite only contesting selected GPs he moved up to 30th in the rankings with a final tally of 32 points and a best race finish of 11th at Gore Basin.

The arrangement for '06 is the same with the PAR Homes Honda team aiming to take in as many GPs as their domestic commitments will allow.

"In an ideal world I'd like to get full-time back into it again but I think we're going to do seven or eight GPs. Paul's obviously interested in GPs but we're more of a British-based team and to start doing GPs full-time is a massive commitment. After what happened with



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Chambers it's a start just to get back into GPs to be honest."

Wayne's been forced to move away from the family home near Grange-over-Sands to pursue his racing dream and is currently living in the mid-Wales town of Llandrindod Wells.

"I moved down there two months ago – I was living in Sterling with Scott Gardner but all the travelling we had to do was horrendous. We wanted to be more central and there are four or five tracks within 20 minutes of where I am now so it's spot on."

As well as an abundance of tracks the relocation has also had the double bonus of moving him a lot closer to his team's base making Wayne's day-to-day life much easier.

"Everything's great with the team, Paul is doing a mega job and I'd like to thank him for all his help, support and advice. I'd also like to thank my mechanic Dave Winchester for doing such a good job and my girlfriend Steph for her support – I'm 100 per cent happy with everything.

"The bikes are working good and there's no

pressure – it's basically just go out and ride the best I can. If you put the work in – and I've been flat out over the winter with my training and getting a good set-up with the bike – it all comes together and it's paying off now."

Physical conditioning is a vital part of any professional motocross racer's arsenal and Wayne's trainer Willy Linden has just about the best credentials around having worked with, among other big names, nine-time world champion Stefan Everts.

"I've been flat-out with Willy for three years but to be honest this is the first year I've started to see proper results. He's based in Belgium so I fly out for fitness tests and blood checks. My fitness is where I want it to be but obviously you never stop trying to improve it."

As part of his winter training programme Wayne spent time at the Millsaps Training Facility in the USA – and it was an eye-opening experience for him!

"I've been racing for 18 years and you never stop learning but I've probably learned more over the winter than I have in the last 17 years.

Being at Millsaps has helped a lot with jumping and lots of little things that come together to make a bigger thing.

"So I've been working on all those parts and also the mental aspect which is 50 per cent of the job – you've got to be mentally strong. It's a long season and it does get difficult to stay focussed week-in, week-out."

So he's happy with his team, happy with his form, fighting fit and mentally strong – what Wayne really needs to do now is raise his profile and start mixing it with the likes of Carl Nunn and Billy MacKenzie in the public consciousness as well as on the track.

"To be honest it's a little bit frustrating but maybe it's because I don't push myself forward enough and try to raise my profile. I like to keep myself to myself so maybe I should be out there doing a bit more."

So would a cool nickname help? "When I was in the States they started calling me Wayner and it sort of stuck. I suppose it's better than Smithy but it does sound a bit like wiener!"

Moving up?

Future plans...

As one of the top guns in the British four-stroke champs Wayne's got considerable big-bike experience and hasn't discounted the possibility of following Swordy up to the MX1 division.

"I haven't really thought about next year but I haven't ruled MX1 out. Obviously, if the opportunity did come up and the deal was right I'd move up to MX1 but as things are going at the moment I'm really happy with MX2.

"I've got experience on the big bike – I love riding it – and I can carry good pace on the big bike. Without a doubt you need more physical strength – you can ride it fast for a little bit but it can get on top of you.

"And switching between the 250 and the 450 isn't a problem for me although I find it easier to move from the 250 up to the 450 than from the 450 down to the 250."



In GP action at Matchams in '05

Bit from the boss

Rowlands reckons...

PAR Homes Honda offered Wayne a lifeline at the start of '05 season when the Chambers team folded and it's turned out to be a positive move for team owner Paul Rowlands.

"Wayne's a good lad, quite easy to manage and very dedicated," says Paul. "He always puts in 110 per cent effort. Motocross is basically his life. He's moved down here now and lives just a couple of miles away. Hopefully we'll bring his career on."

And Paul's aware that Wayne needs to race at the highest level if his speed is to continue to increase. "He needs to do more GPs to get his speed up. When I signed Wayne up for this year I registered the team and have listed the GPs we'll be available to do if we can get a ride."

WORKS WEAPONRY!

WALKER'S WORLD
Tip-top prep with our tip-top tech!

Walker waffles about the works weapons that you can see up close and personal when you wander to a round of the Maxxis British motocross championship

OUR NATIONAL MX season is well and truly under way and, as always, the British championship scene is rife with trickiness. Ours is one of the best national championships in the world – for its racing, its tracks, its riders and the professionalism of its teams.

Each and every team puts 100 per cent effort into the scene and it really is beginning to show. All over the country riders, mechanics, family members, girlfriends and staff seem to be working harder each year to put the image of our sport and I think it's absolutely cracking.

At the top level each team spends the cold winter months organising sponsors and getting ready for the test season in the early part of the year. The riders sweat it out in their comfy gyms, watching MTV as they run on the treadmill while the mechanics and teams put their ultimate package together to go to the startgate.

I dragged my big Oirish arse into gear and made the trip across country to Canada Heights for round two of the British championship so I could check out the paddock. Here is a collection of the bikes in their final stage of development for this season and I would like to say congratulations to all the teams and individuals in the pits for putting on a great show and continuing to raise the game...

And you may notice one privateer bike at the end of the section – I just had to include this one as it looks the nuts. Replica bikes are good!

Walker's Big Banger!

This month's top tech tip comes from Terry in Scotland who's come up with a cunning plan to help crashers reach the chequered flag. Over to you Big Tel...

"Ever been in a race and survived a big off with no injuries only to find a broken clutch or front brake lever stopping you from getting back up and powering through the pack for the win?

"All you need to combat this problem is a three mm drill. Drill a hole roughly halfway along both levers. Then if you do eat dirt and the front of the bike takes a thump, instead of snapping so far in that you can't use them and have to DNF (again) the levers will now snap where the holes are drilled and you'll still have enough to get you through the rest of the race!"

So there you have it, an idea so simple

it's a wonder the Japanese manufacturers haven't caught on to it (KTM do already

use a similar idea).

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EA/Champ KTM

Carl Nunn #1

Tyres – Michelin

Bars, grips and sprockets – Renthal

Wheels – Talon

Air filter – Twin Air

Suspension – WP full factory

Motor – Factory

Everything else is factory, factory, factory!

Kawasaki Racing Team

Stephen Sword #74

Tyres – Michelin

Exhaust – HGS

Suspension – KYB full factory

Oil – Motorex

Air filter – Twin Air

Chain – DID

Everything else is factory, factory, factory!

nut or bolt may become damaged, broken, or fail out rider. An overtightened nut or bolt may become damaged, broken, or fail out

Part Name	Nm	kgf-m	ft-lb
Cylinder Head Cover Bolts	9.8	1.0	(87 in-lb)
Cylinder Head Bolts (M10)	50	5.0	37
(M8)	12	1.2	(87 in-lb)
Camshaft Chain Tensioner Bolts (M5)	1.0	1.2	(106 in-lb)
Cylinder Bolts	1.2	1.2	(106 in-lb)
Camshaft Cap Bolts	(Front)	0.7	5.2
Engine Oil Drain Plug (M10)	1.5	1.5	11
Engine Oil Drain Plug (Water Pump Cover)	25	2.5	18
Kick Pedal Pivot Bolt	49	5.0	37



Bike-It Dixon Yamaha

Billy MacKenzie #211

Oil – ELF
 Brake pads – Armstrong
 Handlebars, grips and sprockets – Renthal
 Wheels – Talon
 Discs – Braking
 Tyres – Dunlop
 Motor – Rinaldi
 Air filter – Twin Air
 Cables – Venhill
 Chain – Triple-S
 Exhaust – Arrow
 Suspension – KYB modified stock



RWJ Honda

James Noble #10

Footpegs – Life Speed
 Levers – Sunline ARC
 Bolt kit – Mettec
 Tyres – Michelin
 Triple clamps – MBO plus 5mm risers
 Wheels and sprockets – Talon
 Oil – Putoline
 Air Filter – Multi Air
 Chain – RK Chain
 Exhaust – Akropovic
 Handlebars and grips – Renthal
 Start device – Pulse
 Brake discs – Moto Master
 Suspension – A-kit Showa



Motovision Suzuki

Neville Bradshaw #5

Oil – Motul
 Exhaust – DEP
 Suspension – Kitted Showa
 Tyres – Michelin
 Clutch parts – Hinson
 Wheels – SM Pro
 Air filter – Twin Air
 Discs – Moto-Master
 Extras – DEP Quickshift



Meredith Honda

Jordan Rose #15

Tyres – Pirelli
 Oil – Bel Ray
 Triple clamps – Pulse
 Guards – Pro Carbon
 Footpegs – Fro Systems
 Handlebars – Pro Taper
 Exhaust – DEP
 Air filter – Twin Air
 Suspension – A-kit Showa

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HONDA	CRF250	2006	X2 FROM £2799	KAWASAKI	KX250F	04-05	X3 FROM £2399	KTM	5X325	2003	£2399	YAMAHA	YZ250F	02-05	X12 FROM £2199
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HONDA	XR250	01-03	X3 FROM £2999	KAWASAKI	KDX 220	2003	£2299	SUZUKI	RM 250	02-05	X5 FROM £1999	YAMAHA	WR 450F	2004	X2 FROM £2999



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CAS Honda

Ken De Dycker #9

Footpegs – HRC
Wheels – HRC
Steering damper – HRC
Brakes – DP Brakes
Tyres – Pirelli
Oil – Silkolene
Exhaust – Leo-Vince
Guards – Pro Carbon
Shifter – Hammer Head
Triple clamps – RG3
Clutch lever – Works Connection
Chain – Tsubaki
Clutch parts – Hinson
Suspension – B-kit KYB (Josh Coppins runs A-kit on his machine)

PAR Honda

Mark Jones #7

Oil – Rock Oil
Chain – Iris
Exhaust – Leo Vince
Levers – Sunline ARC
Guards – Pro Carbon
Handlebars – Renthal
Triple clamps – RG3
Tyres – Dunlop
Cables – Venhill
Wheels – Talon
Radiators and hoses – GMX
Clutch – STM slipper clutches
Start Device – Fro Systems
Pistons – Vertex



Pioneer Yamaha

Glen Phillips #11

Exhaust – DEP
Bars, grips and sprockets – Renthal
Wheels and discs – 2C
Suspension – TRS
Radiators and hoses – GMX
Footpegs – Pivot Pegs
Chain – Regina
Tyres – Pirelli
Triple clamps – MBO
Motor – Rinaldi Kit

MotoXtreme Kawasaki

Mark Hucklebridge #22

Start device and footpegs – Fro Systems
Exhaust – HGS
Handlebars, grips and sprockets – Renthal
Chain – DID
Oil – Motorex
Air filters – Twin Air
Clutch parts – Hinson
Levers – Sunline ARC
Pistons – Wossner

Part Name	N.m	kgf-m	ft-lb
Head Cover Bolts	9.8	1.0	(87 in lb)
Head Cover Bolts (M10)	50	5.0	37
Head Cover Bolts (M6)	12	1.2	(87 in-lb)
Head Cover Bolts (M6)	9.8	1.0	(7.2 in-lb)
Head Cover Bolts (M6)	12	1.2	(106 in-lb)
Head Cover Bolts (M6)	12	1.2	(106 in-lb)
Head Cover Bolts (Front)	7.0	0.7	5.2
Head Cover Bolts (M10)	15	1.5	11
Head Cover Bolts (M10)	9.8	1.0	(87 in-lb)
Head Cover Bolts (M10)	25	2.5	18
Head Cover Bolts (M10)	49	5.0	37



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Gordon Crookard #13

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Chain – DID
Handlebars – Renthal
Oil – Motorex
Frame and sump guards – Pro Carbon
Exhaust – Doma
Tyres – Bridgestone
Clutch baskets – Hinson
Pistons – Wiseco
Brake discs – Moto Master
Air filter – Twin Air
Clutch levers – Works Connection
Suspension – A-kit Showa

Molson Kawasaki

Tommy Searle #101

Footpegs and levers – Sunline ARC
Tyres – Michelin
Wheels – HAAN wheels with DID rims
Handlebars and grips – Renthal
Clutch parts – Hinson
Brakes – Moto Master
Exhaust – Akropovic
Pistons – Vertex
Chain – DID
Guards – Lite Speed
Oil – Motorex
Triple clamps and covers – DL Concepts
Suspension – B-kit KYB



Maximum Solutions Suzuki

Lewis Gregory #8

Handlebars – Pro Taper
Tyres – Maxxis
Suspension – K-Tech
Oil – Castrol
Wheels – Excel
Air filter – Twin Air
Cables – Venhill
Exhaust – DEP
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After two years and five operations, Kenneth Gundersen has finally put his injury nightmare behind him and is back on the GP pace

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

WHEN KENNETH Gundersen strode onto the podium of the GP opener at Zolder last month it marked the end of a tortuous two years in which the 24-year-old Norwegian had undergone no less than five operations on his right knee.

"I didn't know what level I was on compared to the fast guys until I got to Zolder but I know I had trained more than anyone else for the last six months and that result made all the work worthwhile.

"I kept believing in myself, that I could still ride motocross at the highest level. But when you have been out for more than a year-and-a-half it's always difficult and you don't know if you are fooling yourself.

"I did all of the international races in Italy this spring but I didn't get a single result. It was my plan to train really hard all week and I treated those races as part of my training programme also. Sometimes I was fastest in the qualification and I even led the race at Montevarchi in front of Philippaerts. I could ride that pace really easy but my body was simply exhausted after five laps because I had done so much training all week.

"But those races were not important. I had to do that work to get fit and I am so grateful to the team. They were so supportive the whole time even though I wasn't getting results. They saw how much work I was doing and understood that was the reason for me getting

tired at the races. They knew those results meant nothing and that there was a purpose.

"I had planned to take some rest during the week before Zolder anyway but then I was sick – puking and on the toilet for three whole days – so I didn't ride at all that week. But all of the training I had done in the weeks before had got me ready. Finally I could relax and everything came good!"

And how! In the first moto Kenneth was the only rider in the pack actually making passes stick as opposed to benefiting from the mistakes of others as he raced out of the pack to second with no goggles from lap four.

"I even passed Philippaerts early in the race so if I hadn't had problems with my goggles for sure I could have won that first moto. My speed was good and I was riding easy, surprisingly easy. I saw the other guys making mistakes all over the track. But this was the first race – they were probably nervous, probably putting a lot of pressure on themselves."

And those passes? "The film came away from the lens and I got dirt behind it so it was smeared and I couldn't see anything and I had to throw them away. I had to find new lines then. If I stayed behind them I couldn't see!

"The second heat was more difficult. I got a bad start but I didn't stress and rode so that I could attack all race. But they had flattened the track a lot during the interval, it was I felt too easy and almost everyone was on the same speed.

"But still I had a good feeling, I felt that I was stronger than the other guys. That was a new feeling for me. I always felt in the past that I was one of the fastest but I would fade at the end. It was a good new feeling that I was stronger than the others at the end. That was the reward for all of the effort I put in over the last six months."

And Kenneth is well aware of the debt

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Kenneth struggled at Mantova after training too hard during the week – but he treated the international as a practice session

he owes to Michele Rinaldi, the Ricci team and Scott.

"Without them I wouldn't be here. I shouldn't really have come back last year because my knee was still not strong enough but I was desperate to try. I needed to get a ride for this year and I didn't really show anything. But still Yamaha gave me the chance, Michele Rinaldi saw something in me still."

"We talked and he promised to look into the possibilities and a few weeks later he came back to me with the chance to join Team Ricci. They gave me a lifeline. I was surprised that Yamaha wanted to give me a deal. I hadn't ridden for so long but they were so positive."

"Almost no-one wanted me as personal sponsor but I had a long term relationship with Scott for goggles and, like Yamaha, they were really positive and agreed to extend our relationship to clothing. And the Ricci team helped me to get sponsorship for helmets and boots from Vemar and Gaerne."

"The sponsors are queuing up when you are on the podium but you get to know who your friends are when you are down and nearly out. It was nice to be able to give my sponsors something back so early at Zolder for the faith they had in me."

Kenneth has been in Italy since the turn of the year and quickly settled in at Team Ricci. "I have been in several factory teams but this team is unbelievably good. Everyone is so nice and understanding, they have trust that their riders will do what they feel is best for themselves because none of us would be in it if we didn't want to succeed."

"Even when I wasn't getting results it was no problem, everyone stayed calm and said that Zolder was the real start. And the team is a nice mix – the young wild kid Guarneri, the old fox Chiodi and me somewhere in the middle. The team and Yamaha have given me all of the possibilities. Everything is in the right position – it's up to me to be smart and get the job done."

"I am just thankful to the sponsors who have made it possible for me to approach the series the way I want to. I'm not going to get rich this year but I have the support to employ someone to drive my camper so I can fly to the races which are a long way away. If you are exhausted and stressed when you arrive you are never going to win, I saw that at the international races. And I have done that with my dad when I started so I know how hard it is – perhaps that's the reason I appreciate all of the help I get and want to repay their faith."

"My starts were not good in Zolder but I got a second placed start behind Seguy at Montevarchi in the Italian championship. More guys are going to be fast on the hard tracks but I have a good feeling. That was my only good start but I have been catching and passing guys like Chiodi in the early laps of those Italian races so I know my speed is good on all tracks. I think the main difference now is that I am older and stronger, both mentally and physically."

"Normally I will race MX2 for two years but a lot depends on results. I want to be world champion in MX2 before I move up again and I'm not going back to MX1 until I reach my goal. I still have time."

"I shouldn't have gone up in 2001 but I was pushed to it when KTM didn't have enough guys in the big class. For sure MX1 is the premier class but MX2 is hard in a different way."

"I am one of the older guys, I have a wiser head on my shoulders but I am still only 24 and I think I can be crazy too when it is necessary. But first I have to stay smart. You know I've been in the same position as those other guys when I was younger but I am not wasting energy on pointless moves and I am not going to take unnecessary risks."

"For sure some of the young guys in

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Joint account

Tale of torture

"Back in '04 I had planned to be consistent until Teutschenthal and then start to push more and I was running third when I crashed. I came out of a turn, the bike kicked me sideways and I put out my leg but it hit the ground before my bike and me.

"I knew immediately it was bad. I didn't even try to stand up, I just crawled off the track. I thought at first it was the ligaments in my right knee which were broken but it was the cartilage, completely destroyed. "First I went to a doctor in Norway. He was a sports doctor, used to dealing with footballers and the national Olympic team. And he was positive. He said that I would need an operation in the end but that perhaps it would be possible to end the season, perhaps even two seasons.

"He went in and cleaned up the knee and I tried to do a few GPs but it wasn't working. I went back and he said there was a guy in Sweden – Doctor Pettersson – and he was the best specialist for this kind of injury in the whole world.

"As soon as Doctor Pettersson saw the x-rays he said that it was necessary to rebuild the cartilage and he told me straight off that it would take one to one-and-a-half years. And if I didn't do that, I would have a solid knee within two years.

"First he took out the cartilage from the right knee but it was completely destroyed and they couldn't use it to grow fresh cells in the laboratory. So they went into the left knee and took some fresh cells from there to make sure there was no possibility of rejection. They grew the cartilage from something like 10,000 cells to 10,000,000. They took a piece of my knuckle too, put the cartilage in liquid form on top of that and covered it with a piece of skin from my thigh. They completely rebuilt the cartilage.

"After that I was in bed for three months, my leg strapped in a machine to make the leg go backwards and forwards. The new cartilage needed to have that movement to make it form to the right shape for the muscles.

"After three-and-a-half months the cartilage is like cotton thread. I was still on crutches but I could slowly start with training on the bicycle and after six months I could push harder. I was desperate to get back to racing but then I had problems with the knee locking up.

"The cartilage had grown too much. They said it was something which happened sometimes but it meant more surgery. They took off the top of the cartilage so there was again a new soft layer on top and I was back on the machine for another two-and-a-half months.

"It was already May/June. It wasn't a good idea to race at Gaildorf – I wasn't ready – but I got lucky. It rained like hell and I was able to plug through to seventh. If I hadn't made that result perhaps Yamaha would not have been interested and I wouldn't have been racing now but I was not ready and my other results showed that.

"At Lierop I got through from nearly last to sixth in three laps but I just couldn't stand any more. I had no power, I was breathing like a running horse. I was in pain just walking and it still isn't perfect – it probably never will be – but it is good enough to do all of the training I need, it is good enough to race and it is getting better every month."



Hard training has helped Kenneth regain his fitness – he calls this exercise the wench-press!

MX2 are going to be faster than me sometimes but I'm not going to push more than 90 per cent the first eight races. First of all I want to stay on two wheels and don't want to get injured again.

"When you haven't raced for one-and-a-half years you need time to believe in yourself. If you think you're going to walk straight back into it you're dreaming. For me every race is a new challenge and I want to finish top five. If I can do that I will be happy and I will be able to see where I am."

The last two years have given Kenneth a new perspective on life. "When you are lying home in bed for three months – not able to do anything except watch television – you realise what a good life you have as a professional sportsman, being paid to do what you enjoy most.

"It was something I had forgotten a little bit but now I really appreciate how lucky I am to

be able to race motocross for a living. Even the training is fun now and I never felt this way before. So many young kids get everything delivered on a plate and don't appreciate how lucky they are. When I started racing, travelling round with my dad, if I didn't qualify we couldn't pay the diesel to get to the next race.

"Then I was two years with Champ, two years with Kawasaki, again with KTM and maybe I was getting a little complacent, taking everything for granted. It is easy to deny it but if you open your eyes and look back you can see that perhaps you could have trained harder, you could have been more professional and you learn and grow as a sportsman and as a man.

"If there is one positive thing I take out of my injury it is the genuine belief that I can now be world champion one day and I don't think that would have been the case without this accident!"



Gundersen shocked the MX2 world at Zolder



Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

GOLDEN DAYS!

With the Frome club celebrating their 50th birthday this year, Jack casts his mind back to 1988 when Asham Woods was venue for the British 250 GP

FROME AND District United Motorcycle and Light Car Club. What a moniker! And they're celebrating their 50th anniversary this year with yet another British championship event at the long-serving, illustrious Asham Woods track near Frome in Somerset.

The club's equally illustrious president was the late RRC Walker. Better known as Rob, he was famous in the late fifties and early sixties for running a hugely successful Formula One racing team with the fastest driver of that era – Stirling Moss – at the wheel.

Resplendent in Rob Walker's dark blue racing livery with a distinctive white nose band, Moss used British-built Cooper and Lotus-Climax cars to constantly humiliate Enzo

Ferrari's factory missiles, scoring especially famous victories at Monaco and the Nurburgring in 1960.

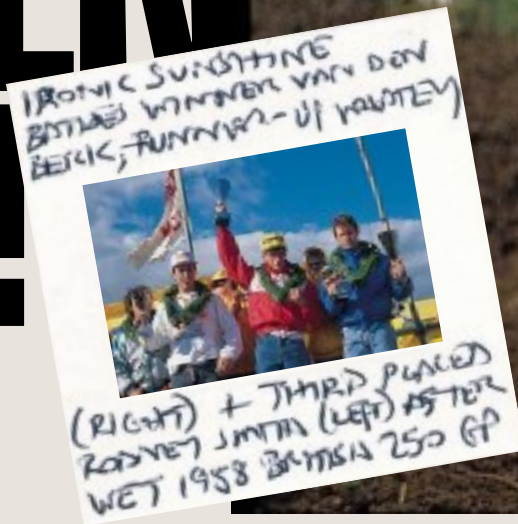
So it stood to reason that the Frome club ran an annual national 'Rob Walker Trophy' race which, when Asham Woods began to host British championship rounds in the early seventies, became the 'National Castrol Rob Walker Trophy Scramble incorporating the British Motocross Championship 500cc'!

Clerk of the course then, as now, was Warminster's Jim Webb with his wife Val as secretary. They welcomed the new-fangled British Open series at Asham Woods on April Fools' Day, 1979!

Throughout the 1980s a succession of

British 125, 250 and sidecar rounds graced the venue. An 18-year-old Dave Thorpe (Kawasaki) won the opening 250cc skirmish of 1982 at Frome and a memorable 125 national title climaxed there with Roger Harvey beating Jonathan Wright and Paul Hunt in the final race of 1983.

Set in woodland around a steep, rocky ravine, Asham Woods is a spectacular natural amphitheatre with great viewing for spectators. But its finest hour actually occurred by default in 1988 when the Berkshire-based Mortimer Motor Cycle Club was awarded the British 250GP. Run by Mark Bosher, Mortimer was suffering noise problems with its posh neighbours at Streatley Hills. Nothing new there, then!





A 20-year-old Rob Herring lashes his Yamaha from last to seventh in the second moto

Bosher's programme notes thanked the Frome club for the use of their 'Grand Prix track' and pointed out that the last time Mortimer MCC organised an international solo event was in 1957, when the 250cc 'Coupe de Europe' – predecessor of the 250 world championship – was held at Beenham Park (and 50,000 folk showed up!).

For 15 years prior to 1988 Britain's 250cc GP had revelled in beautiful weather. Asham Woods made up for those 15 years in the space of 48 hours. Squalls of wind, rain and hailstones battered the circuit that whole weekend of May 28th and 29th!

The battle for world honours lay between Heron Suzuki homeboy Jeremy Whatley,

Yamaha's reigning world 125 champ John van den Berk and Chesterfield Suzuki's American import Rodney Smith. Dutchman van den Berk led by 17 points from Whatley with Smith third another nine points adrift after four rounds. Other leading figures included ex-world champions Pekka Vehkonen and Heinz Kinigadner, a youthful Rob Herring and Swede Jorgen Nilsson who – third overall on a WP Honda in 1987 – had been reunited with his then guru, Harry Everts, in an attempt to recapture that form for Cagiva.

Sunday actually dawned deceptively bright. By halfway through timed training, though, the heavens had opened. A fast early lap was essential and Whatley got it ahead of 'Kini',

Herring, Michele Fanton and van den Berk.

Jem led his rivals to the line in another torrential downpour, holeshot the length of the straight then skated wide into the bushes. "I wasn't really in the lead," he quipped later. "I just held it on longer than everybody else!"

Two turns later van den Berk squared it off across an angry Herring who fell. Those drenched opening moments proved decisive as the handsome Ruud van Nistelrooy lookalike made good his escape ahead of Rodney Smith while Whatley slid off on lap four and slipped behind Vehkonen.

Kini – shouting and bawling at anyone who dared get in his way – stormed from 14th to fifth until his KTM, radiator choked with mud, ►

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*The home fans are
impervious to the rain as
Whatley heads to victory
in race two*

burnicle's beat



began to misfire. Then Pekka's Cagiva broke a piston so Jem lay a clear third rather than a threatened fourth.

Up front the aggressive van den Berk, his rear tyre flat, clawed his relatively clean way to a 20-second advantage over a steady Smith, chaperoned trackside by anxious team manager Michele Rinaldi, as the track began to dry and became even claggier!

Whatley lamented his result. "It must have been the pressure," figured the lean Hampshireman. "I just didn't click. I wasn't taking the right lines. Wasn't thinking. You know when you aren't riding nicely. Everything's bitty and you're having to work hard."

Rain clattered down again as Jem genuinely holed out race two, took a tighter grip on the first turn and set about opening a gap over Vehkonen, van den Berk and Kinigadner. Outwardly unruffled, Whatley picked immaculate lines as all around him fans howled, drenched but delirious support. And the sky ironically brightened in time for them to give their hero a rapturous reception as he rode his final victorious lap.

Within 15 minutes the presentation ceremony basked in mellow sunshine...

Van den Berk's overall win extended his title lead by two points but the cocksure Dutchman knew he had a job on his hands. After the Czech round, where he lost, he ignored the Englishman. At Frome, where he narrowly won, he didn't.

"Yeah, he came up and said did I realise he'd won five out of the last seven motos!" reported Jem dryly. "That doesn't matter. I've



*Pekka Vehkonen tiptoes
around Frome as the rain
eases during race one*

just got to stay close. It's all gonna happen later in the year."

It did. 'Buck' Whatley broke his leg in a tragically simple, slow speed practice fall at Matchams Park – his local track – and John van den Berk won his second world title.

The world series never returned to awesome Asham Woods but those British championship rounds have kept on coming for over 30 years.

So happy birthday to Frome and District United MC and LCC and here's to the next half century...



Steve Cox is an American moto-journo who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. A staffer at famed US weekly Cycle News for over four years before striking out on his own to do the freelance thing, Steve's an ex-pro motocross racer so he can ride as well as write. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides top-level insight and features fresh from the Stateside scene...



**GRANT (#8) SEWED UP THE TITLE
IN SEATTLE WHICH WAS, IN
AMERICAN SPEAK, A MUDDER!**



Words and photos by STEVE COX

GRAND SLAM!

After claiming another title Grant Langston's got nothing left to prove on the little bikes...

GRANT LANGSTON CAME TO THE US A YOUNG, BRASH SOUTH AFRICAN WHO HAD JUST LAID CLAIM TO THE Y2K WORLD 125cc CHAMPIONSHIP. AND IF NOT FOR A BROKEN WHEEL AT THE FINAL AMA NATIONAL OF THE YEAR HE MOST LIKELY WOULD HAVE WON THE '01 AMA 125cc CHAMPIONSHIP AS WELL.

SINCE THEN HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN WINNING A NATIONAL TITLE AND BOTH 125cc REGIONAL SX CROWNS. HE'S THE ONLY GUY EVER TO DO IT. NOW, AFTER ONE MORE SHOT AT THE 125cc OUTDOOR TITLE, HE'S HEADING BACK TO THE 250cc CLASS WITH SOMETHING EXTRA TO PROVE.

WE SAT DOWN WITH GRANT AFTER HE CLINCHED THE 2006 125cc WESTERN SERIES IN SEATTLE AND HE WAS ALL GRINS.

DBR: It must have been a heck of a rollercoaster ride of emotions for you today to start out four points down and come away with the championship. What was going through your mind before the race?

GL: "Coming in here being four points down it was a concern. If it was two points I would think to myself 'all right, Grant, it's all in your hands – beat him and you're good'. But I was thinking 'man, what if he pulls it together and rises to the occasion?'."

"So I thought 'I can't get all caught up and worry too much. Whatever happens, happens. I've got nothing to lose. It's time to go for it'. When I was laying in the truck and I saw it raining I was like 'man, maybe it's not a bad thing – maybe someone upstairs is trying to help me out here!'."

DBR: So god is a Grant Langston fan?

GL: (Laughs) "I hope so. He must like me at least a little bit. He's been very kind to me so I guess I owe him one. But if Andrew was a mud specialist I'd have been a little more concerned but I knew he's not. I don't want to sound mean but – I'm sure he'd admit it – he's not a good mud rider."

"I'm not a bad mud rider. I've had some bad races but I've also had some good races in the mud so I knew I had to make sure that I made tonight a good night and get good starts and it was an awesome night. I won my heat race, I won the Main, I had the fastest lap and I couldn't have planned it any better."

"I laid in the motorhome and it was raining at five

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GRANT LANGSTON interview

o'clock and I was bored out of my mind and I just laid down and I just ran through my head how my dream night's going to go and it pretty much turned out how I dreamt it. It made it all that much more exciting and sweet."

DBR: Two years ago after getting fired from Red Bull KTM a lot of people thought you were done.
GL: "Yeah and it just cracks me up because people have a very short memory. They think you're a has-been if you have a bad season. I'm not going to put all the blame on the bike that I was riding but there were some issues and the reason I signed with Mitch was that he was one of the few people who actually saw through the problems that

we had and he said 'I believe you will win championships again'. He gave me the opportunity and I can't thank him enough for that.

"I've had people ask if going to Kawi was for the money and, no, in all honesty I made less money but in return I've won championships. I've had a lot of fun, my career's taken off again and even though I was earning less salary I've made good bonuses and it's really paved the way. Now I've got people that are really interested in me for next year and people know that Grant Langston's for real. He's not a has-been. He's not a washed-up old guy. I'm still 23. I'm young. I've got a lot of good years in me and I'm just looking forward to starting the next part of my career."

DBR: As a proven championship winner you have to be the favourite for the outdoor title this year.

GL: "We've done some outdoor testing and I think the bike's good and I think I'm good. I know there are going to be a lot of good riders for sure that are going to be tough to beat and I'm looking forward to trying to win that championship again. I've won it once and I lost it once



through a bad wheel so in my mind I almost feel like I should be a two-time champion. I need to try and win it so I can say I'm a two-time National champion. I would love to win it, for sure."

DBR: Now that you've won on both coasts you can say you're a top guy on every supercross track. Do you think you're a top prospect for the 250cc class in '07? ♦

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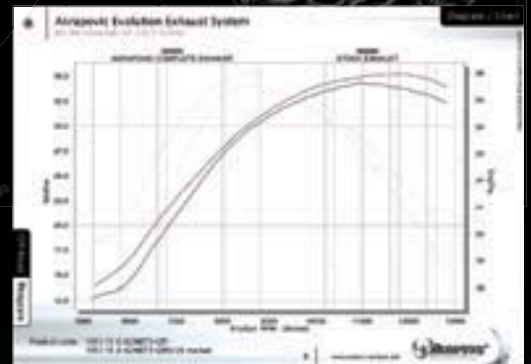


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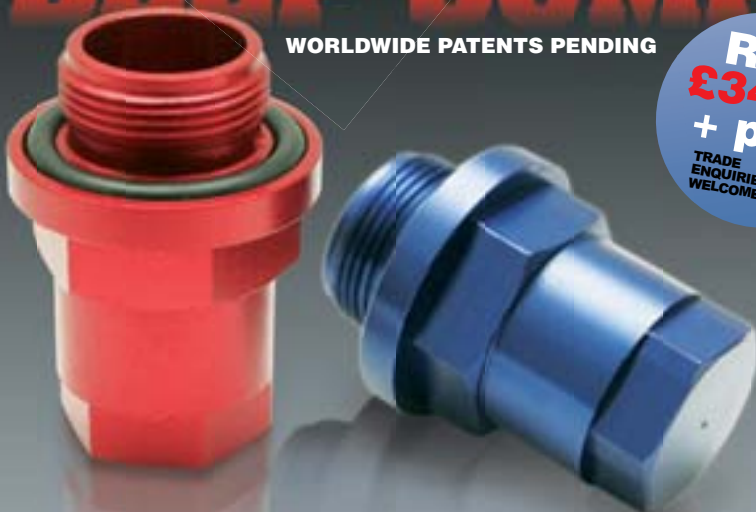
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GL: "My manager Fred – from OMS – has been doing a lot of the negotiating and we've got a couple really good teams very interested and we're still kind of waiting to see what Mitch Payton's deal is and he may even have some offers on the table right now but he didn't want to tell me and put me under pressure for the weekend. This is obviously going to help."

"But the good thing was even before this weekend I've had teams that are like 'we want you' and it didn't matter what happened this weekend. For that I was really excited and I'm just stoked to have some options and we're just going to wait and see what happens with Mitch and maybe Monster and those guys. I know they're in a position to hopefully get stuff put together pretty soon and maybe we'll make a decision before the outdoors."


DBR: Where would you be happy finishing against those guys in the 250 class?

GL: "My goal would be to try and be on the podium indoors and outdoors as much as possible and I'd like to say I want to finish top-five overall or whatever but whether you finish fifth, sixth or fourth I don't think anyone really cares at the end of the day. But it's those podium finishes and those good rides that people remember and that's what my goal is for next year – to be a solid rider all year round."

DBR: How much has your life changed from when you were fired by KTM a couple of years ago to how it is now?

GL: "I felt like the relationship with KTM and myself was kind of going stale and they wanted to go in a different direction and they employed a bunch of new people and new riders and stuff like that and I had kind of made up my mind that I wanted to go somewhere else."

"People always say that they wonder if the grass is greener on the other side and I was beginning to think that and doubting the equipment that I had and I thought I had to go somewhere and prove myself."

"What better place than going to Mitch and starting over? Geoff Fox from Parts Unlimited, he said 'man, I'd really like to see you there, they run our Thor gear and we'd be together'. And it's just become a great relationship [with Mitch at Pro Circuit], we get along great and I think besides the winning I haven't had as much fun racing before as I have the last two years." 





JAMES STEWART NEEDS A BIG SLICE OF LUCK IF HE'S GOING TO TAKE THE TITLE THIS SEASON

TOO CLOSE TO CALL!

Words and photos by STEVE COX

Chad Reed and Ricky Carmichael are all tied up heading into the AMA SX finale with James Stewart within striking distance

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE AMP'D MOBILE/AMA SX SERIES ONE OF THE MOST COMMON QUOTES REGARDING THE CHAMPIONSHIP HAS BEEN "WHOEVER MAKES THE LEAST MISTAKES WILL WIN THE TITLE". RIGHT NOW THAT RIDER COULD BE CHAD REED.

IN DALLAS REED IS ONCE AGAIN THE RIDER TO CAPITALISE ON THE MISTAKES OF HIS RIVALS AND SCORE HIS SECOND VICTORY OF THE SEASON, MAKING UP KEY GROUND IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP WITH ONLY TWO ROUNDS LEFT TO RUN.

POINTS LEADER RICKY CARMICHAEL GRABS THE HOLESHOT JUST IN FRONT OF JAMES STEWART AND AFTER FOLLOWING CARMICHAEL'S LEAD FOR THE FIRST HANDFUL OF LAPS STEWART MAKES A MOVE PAST THE CHAMP AND INTO THE LEAD THROUGH THE WHOOPS AS REED GAINS ON THE DUO IN THIRD.

THE REMARKABLE MOMENT COMES A LAP LATER

when Carmichael seems to head into the whoops a little over his own comfort level as he attempts to keep pace with Stewart and goes down in a heap.

"He went so fast by me that I really didn't even think about it," Reed says of Carmichael who crosses the track in front of him on the way to the ground. "I just saw this big, blurry yellow thing. I knew he was down and I obviously knew that I couldn't just sit there. I don't have the luxury of riding it out points-wise or whatever. I had to get up there and try to go with James."

Three laps later Stewart hits the dirt in a rhythm section. "I was just out front riding my own deal and Heath Voss was in front of me and I really didn't know which way he was going to go. I bottomed my forks out and they turned on me going up the face [of the jump] and I jumped onto the haybales," says Stewart. "I tried my best to recover. I started the thing up – I didn't want

St Louis all over – but we've been working on that so we got it done."

He gets it started after a few kicks and heads back into the fray still ahead of Carmichael. Over the next few laps Stewart works his way back into second, finally passing Nick Wey for the spot on lap 12. But he has nothing for Reed out front who takes the win and moves to within two points of Carmichael in the AMA championship.

"Right from the get-go it was kind of hectic and crazy," Reed says. "James came together on the first triple with Travis Preston and Travis just turned completely sideways. I think his big, long legs kind of helped him out. He squeezed that sucker back straight.

"I was freaking out from then and then I saw Ricky out front, James went to the front and then I followed those guys. I felt that I had some decent lines in the beginning

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and I had a good pace so I was kind of excited. It was nice not to see him gone right away like the last couple weeks so I was excited for that.

"I felt that tonight something was going to go down. I don't know why, I just had that feeling and I saw Ricky go exit left. I'm glad I actually messed up the turn before it and I think if I'd have been a little closer he'd have taken me with him. After that it was actually a really tough race. I felt like crap. I just was out there riding and just was kind of bored I guess. My body kind of shut down and I was riding around the worst I've ever rode."

Then it's off to the rainy Pacific Northwest and the open-roofed Quest Field. Mud is the great equaliser in supercross and motocross so anything can happen. What happens is Stewart makes short work of his competition.

"I got a pretty good start," Stewart says. "Actually, I thought I had the holeshot and then Nick [Wey] came flying from the outside and he got it but I got past him over the first set of jumps and I just wanted to make sure I hit everything the first lap just to get a little gap. So I did the triple and the finish line and I saw on the pitboard that I had like 14 seconds on the second lap - I figured that was good enough and I just tried to manage that and stay away from all of the lappers."

Reed comes from the tail end of the top five to second by the start of the second lap while Carmichael is stuck way back in 13th. It isn't looking good for him.

"Dude, I was so far behind in the first two laps..." reckons Ricky. "I seen James and he was half-a-track ahead. I just tried to pick every guy off one by one."

It's slow going as Stewart and Reed ride all by themselves out front. Carmichael finds his way into third on lap 10 of 15 and that's how the podium ends up.

"It's obviously not the way I wanted it to go but to be honest with you I can't believe I came back up to third," Carmichael says. "I knew I just needed to get on the box. After last week I'm glad to be up here. I didn't get the start that I wanted. I took a bit of a gamble, starting on the outside - I knew the inside there was pretty mucky. I didn't get the start that I needed and I'm just really happy with how far I came from behind. I thought I did a pretty good job of staying calm. It's hard if you get anxious in the mud. I just knew that if I didn't get a good start I had to put myself in a position to have a chance next week and that's what I did. I think I turned a bad race into a good race for me and I'm in a great position."

He's in a great position considering what could've happened but heading into the final round Carmichael and Reed are tied with 316 points apiece with Stewart only five points behind them with 311.

"Anything can happen," claims Carmichael. "You guys have seen it. It's been an amazing year and I'm really happy with what I've accomplished this year and to be honest I feel like I've won a lot more races than I thought I would and I'm really happy."

"We made some improvements today. I know it's in the mud and it's hard to tell but I feel that I felt comfortable in the Main Event. I'm excited. It's going to be great for the fans and great for the sport. Whoever wins is going to be super-excited but whoever doesn't win, I think



WITH ONE ROUND LEFT CHAD REED'S GOT 316 POINTS...



...AND SO'S RICKY! THE STAKES WILL BE HIGH IN VEGAS

SERIES STANDINGS

250cc

1=	Ricky Carmichael	316 points (6 wins)
1=	Chad Reed	316 (2 wins)
3	James Stewart	311 (7 wins)
4	Ivan Tedesco	241
5	Nick Wey	234
6	Michael Byrne	228
7	Travis Preston	191
8	Ernesto Fonseca	125
9	Ryan Clark	116
10=	Mike LaRocco	108
10=	Timmy Ferry	108

it's something that everyone should be very proud of. It's no big deal. I'm looking forward to it and it's going to be fun. I'm just going to try to stay healthy through this week."

And Reed has just as good a shot as Carmichael for the AMA title. "I'm pumped to be in this position. I think, in the end, there have been two really important races this season and I happen to be the winner of those. Basically, 15 races mean nothing. Vegas is the one that counts. We all sat in the press conference at Anaheim I and we all said that we wanted to take it to Vegas and I don't know if any of us really thought it would be this close.

"I think it's going to be fun and I'm super-stoked to

have a shot at winning the title. I know I can do it if I ride the way I can ride. I think it's going to be a good battle. That's all it is for me right now. I just want to ride the way I can ride and if I ride the way I want to ride then I'm going to be happy with that."

For Stewart to win the title he needs to win in Vegas and hope someone besides Reed or Carmichael finishes second. "I hope Byrner steps up huge next week! All I can do is my best and if I win the race and win the world title I can't really ask for anything else. After St Louis I was a little bummed and I was going through a few races where I was just having bad luck. I'm just happy to be in this position."





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**LANGSTON
TAKES OFF AFTER
VILLOPOTO AND
RAMSEY**



FINAL STANDINGS

West Lites

1	Grant Langston	161 points (3 wins)
2	Andrew Short	153 (2 wins)
3	Ryan Villopoto	141 (1 win)
4	Mike Alessi	129
5	Billy Laninovich	125
6=	Nathan Ramsey	116 (2 wins)
6=	Brett Metcalfe	116
8	Paul Carpenter	89
9	Ryan Morais	75
10	Darcy Lange	64

**VILLOPOTO RIDES
SHOTGUN FOR
LANGSTON IN SEATTLE**



BEST IN THE WEST!

Langston comes from behind

After a 10-week break the 125cc West series gets going again in Dallas and only two points separate Andrew Short from second-placed Grant Langston. Two points, two races. In a points chase so close with so few races left small things become significant.

Rookie Ryan Villopoto grabs the holeshot while in the pack Langston and Short start together only for Short to go after his rival right away by stuffing him in a corner in the middle of the pack.

"He had the inside going into turn two and he ran me up into the bales and I lost a bunch of positions because guys were cutting underneath and going left and right

and everything and it just seemed like I was in the wrong place at the wrong time," says Langston. "If I went left someone was there and I'd get held up. But wherever I went, I just couldn't get into a position to get a break and then through the following two rhythm sections I almost landed on a guy in each rhythm lane."

But Langston catches back up to third while his team-mate Villopoto lays the wood to Short in second. Still, the damage is done as the points lead now sits at four which means Langston can't control his own destiny. He needs help in Seattle to grab the title. Mike Alessi grabs the holeshot followed closely by Villopoto with Langston rounding out the top three. Early in the second lap Alessi goes over the bars handing the lead to Villopoto which he only holds for a lap before

Langston goes by. Langston knows that as long as he's in the lead and Villopoto is between him and Short the title is his. Little does he know that Short crashes his way out of the top five on lap three and is never in contention.

"It was weird," Langston says. "I had a feeling it was going to fall into place this weekend. You often see championships where everyone thinks it's going to come down to one point and more often than not someone falters and the points don't end up that close."

"Ryan made it real easy for me to get by because sometimes it can be tough to pass when it gets rutted and one-lined but I got ahead of him and it was really comforting having him behind me. I knew with him behind me it was good enough. I don't think I've had that much fun in the mud ever."



Big Ken was one of the stars of the show at the British championship opener at Lyng

TALL ORDER!

With team leader Josh Coppins on the injured list, CAS Honda's hopes lie with their Belgian giant Ken De Dycker

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

DBR HAVE already featured the man mountain from northern Belgium who's six foot four in his stocking feet. But now even more has happened in the life of 21-year-old Ken De Dycker since he ended the premier world series ninth for the second year running and was successfully wooed by CAS Honda to partner Josh Coppins this campaign.

Keeno's already beaten his team-leader in the first moto at the Lyng British championship season opener and was undeniably the fastest man on the track other than Everts and Tortelli in the opening GP at Zolder.

"All Ken needed was a little love," jokes CAS team manager Neil Prince. And it seems to have done the trick as Ken – a man of few words – is gradually coming out of his shell even though his initial explanation for his leap

into the world elite is short and to the point – "hard training in the winter, good bike, good team." That's great Ken but how about a little more detail?

"I started training a lot earlier this winter with cycling, running and in the gym. I was very sick a couple of years ago and I have had to build up gradually but that is all behind me now. I still had to be careful even last winter and this is the first time I have been able to train without any worries.

"I am not conscious of having changed my riding style. A lot of people have told me it looks different but perhaps it is just because I am fitter and more confident. We tried a few different things on the bike too and perhaps it is that.

"I was already on Honda before with Sarholz

but the CAS engine is even stronger. The team have put in so much work and testing. I never rode Josh's bike so I don't know if we have the same specification but my bike is fast enough for me. We talked about what I like when I joined the team and right from the first time I tried the bike it was pretty near perfect for me.

"Already I have a complete new experience in this team after three years with Sarholz. Everyone at CAS works together, no arguments and I get paid to ride and I get paid on time. I rode for free last year and I am actually owed some money for winning the German title but that is with the lawyers.

"In 2004 I sponsored myself – my supporters paid 14,000 Euros that year. I just want to forget Sarholz now and get on with riding but being a motocross rider is no

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A mechanical DNF in the final moto of '05 cost Ken seventh in the MX1 championship



CAS boss Harry Ainsworth found the photo of Roger Harvey in the buff very amusing



On the boil at the Pernes international



different to anywhere else. If you are getting paid properly then you are happier in your work and you have an incentive.

"Josh and I are both pretty quiet guys so we don't talk so much but in the team with the mechanics it is a really friendly atmosphere – like we are all friends. Andy and Paul are there for me alone, I leave it to them to share out the work and both of them talk to me about anything they see when I am riding.

"And Neil is more like a friend than a manager. We can have fun not just talking about motocross. It is not that far from home to the team base in Belgium but sometimes I stay with my camper at the workshop and it is only 10 minutes to Johan's place [ex GP-racer Boonen – Ken's trainer].

"Josh and I went to America together and we also rode together the first few weeks back in Europe but injuries, first to me and then to him, have prevented that since. The week before Zolder was the first time since Hawkstone that I was able to practice during the week. In the Belgian championship at Mons, one week before Zolder, I didn't start the third moto because I have been having

problems with swelling on the muscle in the hand and it was never going to get better if I stressed it too much too soon.

"Hawkstone was already good but I really didn't know what to expect when I went to Lyng – I had never been to a British championship before and I didn't know the track at all. But everything had been going good in practice all this year and I have confidence in my ability.

"I didn't expect to get such good starts but that just shows you how good the bike is and I certainly didn't expect to win my first race. The entry list at a British championship is almost like a mini GP.

"I mean I'm getting holeshots now! I'm going to write them all down on my bedroom wall. Before I was happy when I was in the first 15. Normally I was already one bike length behind 10 yards out of the gate and at Lyng I was one bike length in front. I didn't practice starts or anything so I put it down to the bike. Perhaps the confidence I have got from my good performances in training has helped.

"I also holeshot at Mons and won by a quarter-of-a-minute. Then in the second heat I got tangled up with Kevin Strijbos at the first

turn but after two laps I was in front again and I was pulling away from Ramon and Strijbos again. But at the end I couldn't pull the clutch in anymore and stalled the bike. If that hadn't happened I think I could have won again because there were only two laps left.

"The Belgian press and public were pretty surprised because it was the first time they had seen me riding for CAS. Somebody from one or other of the Belgian papers rings me every week but they had not made so much of my result at the British championship but Mons was a big shock to them all. My fans are still talking about it.

"I mean Kevin still got the headlines but he won so that's fair enough. Maybe if I had not been troubled with my hand and if I had not stalled the bike then perhaps I would have won the race but that's a lot of maybes. And anyway I am more concerned with the British championship and the GPs. I think I am ready for all tracks."

So roll out the carpet as Big Ken fills in admirably for his absent team leader and CAS look forward to a double helping of potential GP winners this summer!



medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427

There's serious honour at stake as the MXers take on the road racers in a Team Green fitness challenge...

Words by Alan Milway Photos by Paul Thomas

HEAD-TO-HEAD!

KAWASAKI HAVE a great infrastructure of support for their riders – both road and off-road – and they recently organised a fitness testing day that DBR were allowed to sit in on.

Located at a brand new facility in Northampton, they invited Team Green riders from MX and road racing to test themselves and compete against each other to find out which discipline requires better fitness.

Representing the MX boys were Jamie Law and MX Fitness-trained Chad Yarranton while Kieran Murphy and Ian Hutchinson were there for the road riders.

First up was the body fat 'skin fold' test. This was to give an idea of percentage body fat levels. For any athlete reducing body fat is beneficial as fat doesn't contribute to force production and adds 'ballast'. For some sports this is a very critical parameter and can sometimes even lead to disorders and psychological issues with the athletes. For bike riders the more fat you're carrying around the

harder work for you and your bike.

Then it was on to lung capacity and a measure of how much air can be expelled from the lungs – and how quickly this can be done. This is a good guide to health and general fitness. As racers wear protective gear that hinders the flow of cold, fresh air into the lungs we expected good results. After they had all gone red in the face and (almost literally) coughed up a lung the results were very impressive and well above what was expected.

The next test was one that checked reactions and spatial awareness – a great test and impressive that the college had this facility. It is a wall of lights that come on randomly and as they light up you hit them to turn them off. The more you turn off in one minute the higher the score. The test took some practice before the boys became familiar with the best technique but after a few goes they all managed over 300 points at least once in the 60 seconds and were very equal in this but Ian was outright

winner with Jamie in second place. With both sports requiring good reflexes, reactions and co-ordination it was no surprise that they performed very well in this.

There are some tests that give trainers a good comparison of fitness between sports – one of these is the classic 'bleep test' that involves a shuttle run between two lines 20 metres apart keeping tempo with a set of bleeps. The bleeps gradually increase in speed and this eventually weeds out the riders as they struggle to make it to each line in time for the next bleep. It isn't a perfect test and as many riders train on bicycles a more scientific cycling test may be more specific and yield better results but this test still allowed good comparisons to be drawn between the road boys and the motocross lads.

Kieran was carrying a knee injury and this did hinder his progress but when Ian dropped out the MX boys were still stomping on. Finally Chad dropped out but Jamie kept going strong.



Chad and Jamie go for it in the beep test



Budget cuts meant Team Green couldn't afford chairs



Chad can still manage a grin during the side-raises test



Chad's dad Buster used to be this buff – or so he says!

Over lunch, as we (sorry, they) took a breather, it was clear that although on the surface the sports are very different, riders are still riders and everyone seemed to get on well with that mutual common ground.

After the break we moved into the dance studio and it was here we had the biggest giggle at their expense. A dynamic warm-up before the strength testing was performed – an important routine that helps minimize risk of injury and increase the movement about each joint. If this was done first thing in the morning the riders would have got on with it without comment but as we had had a chance to relax into the day there was much amusement as they skipped, pranced and hopped about the room trying to maintain their macho image. Sorry lads – no chance!

The final set of tests focused on strength endurance and ranged from ski-sits to press-ups and side-raises. This is where the fierce competitor in each rider emerged and

these lads showed why they race at such a high level – they just weren't giving an inch! In the ski-sit test (where each riders sits against a wall with knees bent at 90 degrees until they fall over) they all just sat, poker-faced, waiting for the others to fail. This test takes normal people a minute or so to show pain and fail but they all lasted well beyond this and Jamie held on for over five minutes until it was clear he had won. Only then did he show the agony on his face!

The trainer was worried we'd run out of time for the other tests as they were holding out against each other for so long! Chad was in second place so both MXers finished ahead of the road riders. This didn't surprise me as one of the greatest demands placed on a motocross rider is controlling the bike through deep sand, something that requires a lot of strength and holding a stable, standing position. These demands are not placed on a road rider to the same extent so the results were to be expected.

It was then on to the side-raise test – holding

a laterally raised position until failure – and then the final press-up test. The press-ups were performed until failure and I knew Chad should win this one. We'd been doing some upper body strength work and power press-ups and sure enough he romped home in this one with 75 press-ups – an average man could expect to do somewhere in the region of 20-30. Another MX victory and the end of a long day of testing.

The results of the tests were a little arbitrary and the day was more of a chance for the riders to test themselves with a range of challenges. The motocross boys shone in the endurance aspect and it seemed that the motocross riders had a bigger emphasis on physical conditioning. However, it was also clear that all of these young men take what they do very seriously and work to make themselves better at it as they try to be more successful each weekend. Maybe that explains why Chad and I found ourselves out training at 9am the following day...



THE PROSPECT!

Christophe races to a sensational second overall at Gore Basin in '05



At the tender age of 17, Christophe Pourcel is a very real candidate for the '06 MX2 world title - no wonder the French MX press are calling him the 'nouveau Bayle'...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



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A pair of seconds netted the Frenchman second overall in Spain



With big brother Sébastien

CHRISTOPHE POURCEL may come across as a shy teenager but the young Frenchman is arguably the fastest 17-year-old on the planet and a genuine candidate for this year's MX2 world crown.

"For sure I like to have fun just like anyone my age but I guess, compared with many other teenagers, I'm a quiet person. But I am very focused on my job and determined to succeed. I do go out but I also like to be alone and I spend a lot of time on the internet.

"My sport and my preparation takes up most of my time and I just like to turn off when I get the chance. I listen to most things they play on the radio but Offspring and Sum 41 are my favourite groups. And I spend a lot of time on the internet chatting with my friends back home in France."

Just like an ever increasing number of professionals the Pourcel family have now established their base in Belgium for eight months of the year and that's a long way from the family home at Chateauneuf, a 30-minute drive from Marseilles in the south eastern corner of France.

Last year was essentially Christophe's rookie year in the GPs, although he'd already had a couple of impressive debut rides in '04 – highlighted by a 12th in Czecho – when his European championship commitments allowed.

The record books would suggest a rocky start to '05 with a zero pay-day at Zolder but statistics can often mislead and those present will remember that Christophe actually led the second moto before bogging the KX250F and struggling to restart it. In the following GPs in

Spain and Portugal the fragile-looking teenager posted top 10 finishes and some wobbly rides through May – "when Sébastien got hurt and I was on my own the team was struggling a little with bike set-up" – were soon forgotten with the first of three podiums at the Matchams GP.

And that charge to second, right on Andrew McFarlane's rear wheel, came in race two – a rare achievement for a 16-year-old and a tribute to his fitness. It's an aspect of the sport that many teenagers neglect but, as Christophe's already explained, the life of a professional motocrosser is not one of weekend racing and weekend parties.

"During the winter I ride four days a week but once the season starts again I think it is important to recuperate after a weekend's racing and I only practice one day a week. ▶

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But I do physical training every day – I have a programme, mainly cycling and running with some swimming too."

British fans again saw Christophe at his best last summer when he chased home David Philippaerts in race two for second at Gore Basin. But the absolute highlight of the season was his maiden GP moto win at Loket where he ran the wheels off champion-to-be Tony Cairoli for a famous win. And the Sicilian wasn't slow to applaud the performance – "I wasn't riding for the points. Christophe was just too fast for me and I couldn't catch him."

The '06 season started well for Christophe with a decisive victory over the entire KTM team at Pernes and a successful start to his defence of the French national crown. "I enjoyed the second race at Pernes much more than the first. I had holeshot the first and could run away but I had to fight my way through to second and the battle with Tyla was fun – I was able to watch his lines and compare them to mine."

"In the end I didn't quite manage to pass him but it was good training to see how I might be able to pass one of my major rivals sometime during the season. And perhaps that could be decisive for the title!"

"Tyla's style looked more hectic but I don't think he was nervous. I think it is simply his style while my style has always been more flowing and I manage to stay cool even in such circumstances. I hope that works in my favour."

The most pleasing aspect of race one was that holeshot. "I made so many bad starts last year that I got plenty of practice at battling through the pack so it is not a problem. But an important part of Cairoli's success last year was the starts so we focused very hard during the winter to get a bike set-up which will allow us to make good starts."

"Jan De Groot allowed us to try some material from him but I prefer our engine. It is not so aggressive as the factory engine and I find it much easier to use the power all through the range. But we have not only worked on the bike, I have also tried to improve my concentration when practising starts and I am not moving around on the bike as much as I did in the past."

But starts are only one aspect of the game and Christophe brings up his fighting spirit when asked what he feels are his main strengths. "I think I fight to the limit and never give up. I am even more determined when I get on my bike than when I am preparing."

Two years ago big brother Sebastien told DBR that while he was the grafter, his kid brother the one with raw talent. Christophe disagrees. "I don't think I am more naturally talented than Sebastien. I have to work too but perhaps it looks easier because I am able to learn from Sebastien's mistakes. When he has made a mistake in his career I was able to learn from it."

The quiet, deep-thinking teenager has a plan of attack for his world title challenge. "The main thing will be to stay cool at the beginning and not do anything silly. Anyone who wants to be champion will have to make big points on every race because there are five or six riders capable of winning the title so whoever wins will be the one who doesn't get hurt and who scores big every week. I know that sometimes I will have to be satisfied with second place because 22 is better than nothing. It will be important not to make mistakes."

"I don't really have any rider I enjoy racing against most, perhaps De Reuver. He can be so fast and that is a real challenge."

And what about Sebastien, now getting back to his best after an injury-torn '05? "When we are on the track Sebastien is just another rival. I have to beat him too if I want to win and it makes no difference that he is my brother. I am not a physical rider anyway, I like to beat my rivals through speed and skill but I am not afraid of contact. If it comes to that I am sure I can give as good as I get."

The French MX press quite naturally plays on Christophe's youth but it doesn't distract him from his mission. "I don't feel any pressure because I am the youngest of the title candidates. But that is just the way I am. The French press likes to call me the 'nouveau Bayle' but I don't let that worry me either. I am Christophe Pourcel!"

Spanking the Champ camp at Pernes

With team co-owner Patrick Gelade



Team tactics

The GPKR story

Christophe's GPKR team (the initials stand for Gega Pourcel Kawasaki Racing) is a joint effort between his father Roger and major Belgian Kawasaki dealership Gega owned by Patrick Gelade.

"We have a dealership for just about everything in the Kawasaki range – street bikes and off-road bikes, also watercrafts, ATV and so on," explains Patrick. "I have been in racing for 27 years – first car racing, then just one year after I started Gega we already had a team in street bikes, Superbikes, Endurance."

"We also did watercraft races all over Europe and then when my son Alexander started riding I got into motocross. Unfortunately, Alexander died in 2004 after a crash racing and I cancelled all of my race activities."

But one year later Patrick's interest was aroused once more. "Roger Pourcel came to my shop to pick up spare parts for their bikes. The TSM team with Christian Bayle was not so well structured and they were short of parts virtually every week. Roger came in several times, I saw the kids riding too and they were looking for a place to have their workshop and we came to agreement for them to work at my place. "I don't want to talk too much about the problems with Christian Bayle. I think the problem was that the budget was simply not strong enough to run a

world championship team.

"Luckily for me I have developed good contacts with a lot of good partners over the course of 27 years and it is significant that 90 per cent of our partners and sponsors from last year wanted to continue with us and are confident in both the Pourcel family and Gega so I don't have to put finance in."

"We have good bikes, good sponsors, good mechanics, good riders and we all know each other and get on. Thanks to Jan De Groot we have direct support from the factory so all of the budget for bikes and parts is covered by Kawasaki Europe through Kawasaki Benelux."

"Roger Pourcel and myself have established the company together, in the first place to allow the kids to carry on riding together in a family atmosphere. But we have felt from the outset that it's a long-term venture and when it is time for Sebastien and Christophe to move on then we will carry on with other riders."

"We know they will leave one day – probably for the US – but the structure is there for the team to continue after they leave. The boys would like to go to America within the same team but that may prove difficult."

"Already this winter Christophe had a very good offer to go to the States but the team in question only wanted him – it may well be that they will have to go their own ways."

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttly

BONKERS!

It's all going off in the British championship with red flags flying, teenagers winning and the return to the podium of a 'washed-up' former champ – now that's what we call motocross mayhem Rog!

"IT'S GOING to be motocross mayhem Rog!" The pre-race banter between commentary colossi Paul Hardy and Roger Warren is bang on the nail at Matchams where there's a score to be settled in MX1, a new name on the top of the podium in MX2 and a very welcome rostrum return for the Crock Star.

But before the aforementioned Matchams motocross mayhem, Canada Heights stages some cracking racing of its own as the British MX championship stops off at the Kent venue for round two.

Bumped back a place in the calendar from its traditional spot as the series opener, Canada Heights in early April is a much warmer place than Canada Heights in early March so maybe, just maybe, there's a little bit of method to the ACU's madness?

The MX1 class in Kent is a Stephen Sword benefit gig. With no Josh Coppins to turn the screw and the Kiwi's CAS Honda team-mate

Ken De Dycker struggling with his starts the factory Kawasaki man spends the day at the front. Almost two-and-a-half seconds clear in qualifying, Swordy finishes the opening race more than 12 seconds in front of De Dycker with RWJ Honda's James Noble third.

Race two is even easier for Swordy who crosses the line 14 seconds up on De Dycker with Noble again third, this time less than half-a-second adrift of the giant Belgian.

Motovision Suzuki's Neville Bradshaw has a good day at the office with his 5-5 scorecard enough for fourth on the day ahead of PAR Homes Honda's Mark Jones and Wulfsport Honda's Gordon Crockard. But it could be so much better for the Crock Star who, after getting caught up in a race one pile-up, is charging through the pack only for the race to be red-flagged after a paramedic is taken out by a rider. Luck of the Irish? On that evidence Gordy's welcome to it...

Even at such an early stage of the season the MX2 class is shaping up to be a three-horse race – and the horses in question have one hell of a bloodline.

With no wildcard entry from Marc De Reuver to spoil the party, Billy MacKenzie, Carl Nunn and 16-year-old Tommy Searle – 2-3-4 from the opening round at Lyng – get a bit of a menage-a-trois going on.

EA KTM's Nunny wins the opener from the Molson Kawasaki of Searle with PAR Homes Honda's Wayne Smith a lonely third. After a shocking start – and trading passes with Gareth Swanepoel – Billy Mac finally makes it through to fourth on the Bike-it Dixon Yamaha.

Following frantic fettling between races Billy Mac rolls out on a heavily tweaked bike for moto two and wastes hardly no time at all in overhauling holeshotter Nunn and clearing off. Searle gets mired in mid-pack out the gate but shows amazing maturity for a nipper to carve



TOMMY SEARLE
MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 2-3
MATCHAMS 1-3

"I wanted to win but I've got to be happy with two podium finishes. I'm a bit disappointed but pretty happy with the way I rode. I'm learning all the time racing with Billy and Carl – last year I was battling for eighths and ninths and this year I'm battling for the podium so it's definitely getting a lot better."

"My first British championship win – it feels good and hopefully I'll have a few more. The first race was good although I didn't feel I was riding so good, the second race I felt I was riding a lot better but maybe those other two guys were as well. It was hard because they got out the start – when I came round on the first lap Billy already had a 10-second lead over me."

his way through to third.

So with two rounds down the best of British (plus the odd South African, Belgian and Slovakian) head for Matchams with De Dycker leading the MX1 championship chase by seven points from Swordy and defending champ Nunny topping the MX2 table by just two points from Billy Mac.

De Dycker comes out swinging in quali to take pole ahead of Swordy and then does a number on the Scot in both races to avenge his defeat last time out and extend his championship lead to 13 points. Noble's 3-5 card nets him third overall but he's going to have to work harder for a podium at round four if the resurgence of Crockard is more than a one-race flash in the pan.

The Irishman is the man on the move in the opening moto after getting slammed into the fence by an out-of-control MX1 pilot. Picking himself up dead last he blasts his way through

to sixth – passtastic Gordy! – and then stays out of trouble in race two to notch up a cool third. Could this be the start of the Great Crockard Comeback? Bloody well hope so...

In MX2 we may well witness history being made. The opening race gets red-flagged after a spot of – you got it – motocross mayhem sees bodies litter the track and from the restart Smith takes the holeshot and looks to be pulling away. But Searle reels him in, makes the pass stick and with team-mate Swanepoel in tow clears off for his debut race win at this level – no doubt the first of many for a 16-year-old who really could go all the way to the top.

Swanny succumbs to pressure from a chasing Nunny in the closing stages with Billy Mac taking fourth from Smith.

And there's yet more motocross mayhem at the start of the second MX2 moto when Nunny and Searle have a coming together that sends the defending champ break-dancing into a

berm. A Mexican wave of yellow flags follows before a red flag mysteriously appears and the race is halted.

With no-one apparently taking responsibility for the red flag a tattered and torn Nunn is allowed to drag himself to the line for the restart but he's clearly there as a damage limitation exercise rather than to challenge for the win.

The win goes to Billy Mac who fights bar-to-bar with Swanny for a handful of thrilling laps before pulling clear to leap to the top of the championship table. But Searle's eventual third is good enough to add the overall verdict to his race win and moves him to within three points of the series lead as Nunny's gutsy 10th drops him to third.

So that's yer lot for another marvellous month of magical motocross mayhem – the championship now moves to Landrake in Devon on May 28...

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BRAD ANDERSON
MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 8-6
MATCHAMS 8-4

"I broke my throttle hand at the British four-strokes so I came here today just looking to get into the top 10 so I'm pretty happy with that."

"I got a better start in the second race and got through to third and hit a bail, nearly chucked it on the floor and Tommy and that other kid on a KTM [George Strik] came past. I got my rhythm back and passed the kid on the KTM but Tommy had gone."

WAYNE SMITH
MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 3-5
MATCHAMS 5-6

"I'm riding the best I've done in a long time. Them boys in front though – they were doing the whoops and the triple and that's where I was losing it. I tried it a couple of times and nearly crashed big and I just thought there's no point in throwing everything away. I was as quick as them everywhere else, just that one section they were doing me."

"Not a bad day really but I'm still suffering with a chest infection which is draining me. I holeshot the first race and led for a few laps but those boys are riding strong and I couldn't hang with them and got fifth. Second race I crashed on the first lap and was about 15th but I came through to sixth. I'm not making excuses but this chest infection caught up with me and sapped me towards the end."



© Ray Chuss

KEN DE DYCKER
MX1 CANADA HEIGHTS 2-2
MATCHAMS 1-1

"I had bad starts and was not feeling so good with my riding. But two second places is good. There is not really any extra pressure now Josh is out and I'm enjoying being with CAS Honda."

"Today was a little revenge for the last round but I think the most problem last time was the concrete start and not really passing so good."



GARETH SWANEPOEL
MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 5-4
MATCHAMS 3-2

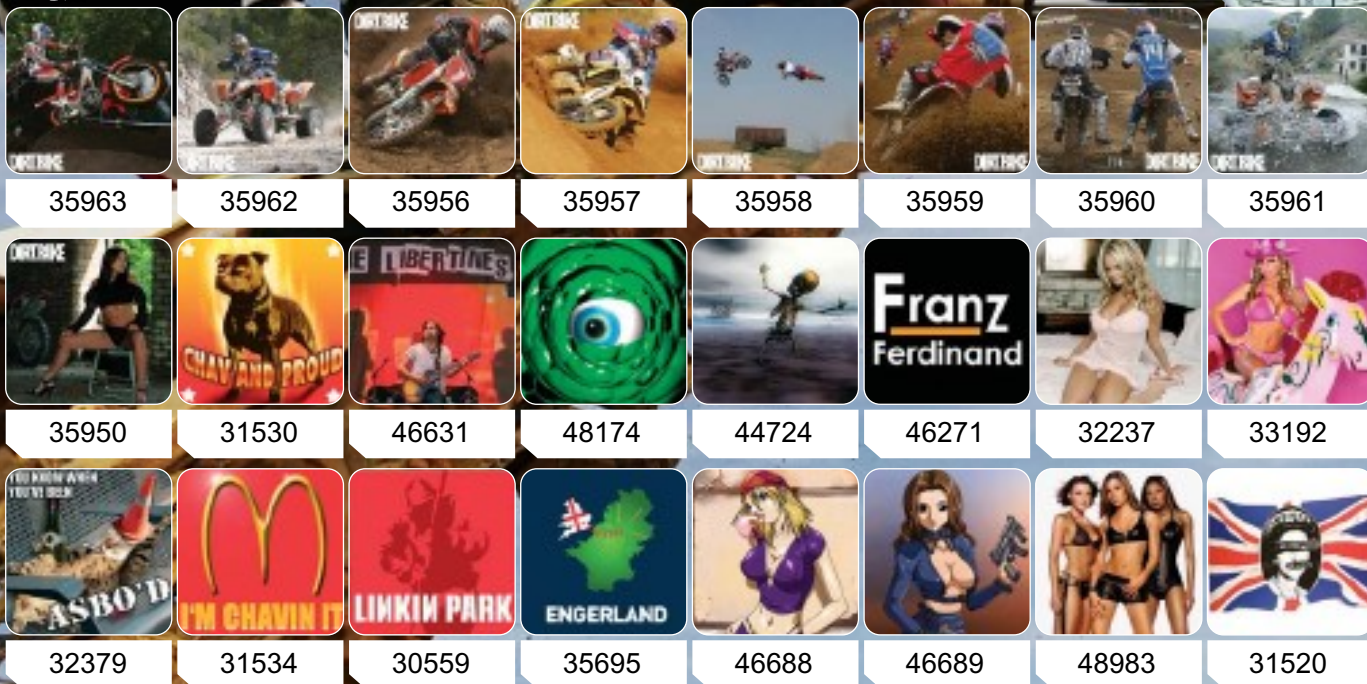
"I had a bit of a bad start in the second race, if I'd had a better start I think I could have run with the top guys. Billy won that race and me and him were battling for fourth in the first so I think I need better starts and I'll be up there."

"It was a good second race but I'm a bit disappointed I didn't win it. Billy seems to be a second race specialist. I'm happy that every week I'm improving, I've been working really hard and I've got to come out at the next British and aim for a double win."

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The Infadels, Love Like Semtex	84613	Gnarls Barkley, Smiley Faces	13106
Soho Dolls, Stripper	84612	Lily Allen, Smile	13089
Editors, Blood	84602	Goldie Looking Chain, Maggot Midnight	13005
Akala, Shakespeare	84599	McFly, Please Please	13107
Fat Boy Slim, That Old Pair Of Jeans	84624	Shakira, Hips Don't Lie	13097
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BILLY MACKENZIE **MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 4-1** **MATCHAMS 4-1**

"After the first race I really started doubting myself but we changed to a standard seat foam which was Ash's idea. Ash thinks he's right all the time and apparently he is because I went out and won the second race. We also changed the head for that last race – we only just made the pitbox – and I got a great start, started putting the hammer down and felt good."

"I was riding really tight in the first race and got a lot of arm-pump – I'm just not relaxed. I don't have an answer for it yet, I've done so much work trying to find an answer this week. But when the track gets rough like that I know it's tough for everyone and I know I can dig deep and get the job done. Carl had a bad one so it means I'm in the lead. I don't want anyone to get hurt but I was quite pleased that Carl's eventually had a bad race – I had a few last year – and it gives me a bit more optimism for the championship."

GORDON CROCKARD **MX1 CANADA HEIGHTS 6-7** **MATCHAMS 6-3**

"First race two boys fell off in front of me on the first lap so I was round in about 24th or something and I came through and got by Bradshaw for fifth but the red flag was already out so I got sixth. Second race there was a big pile-up in the first corner and I was in the middle of it. I wasn't on the ground but I might as well have been. The first time you come down the hill you go into that G-out thing, I hit that and the throttle was loose and came half off the bar – the only thing holding it on was the cables. I finished the lap, came into the pitbox, got the spanners out and must have come out again about 30th. Then I rode hard back to seventh."

"I was totally pissed off at the end of the first race, I fell off because of somebody else getting out of shape and putting me in the fence. I was completely fast but came through to sixth, just pushing, trying to pass, trying to not go down again."

"Race two turned out okay in the end. I really wanted to go with the boys, I really wanted to hang with them. Little bit of confusion with my pitboard – it's not very easy to pitboard at this track where the signal area is – so I couldn't see if they were pulling away or if I was closing. I didn't know whether to push harder or try and conserve myself. I was riding around on my own and couldn't pace myself, I was guessing at what speed to ride at. But third's great. I'm happy."



CARL NUNN **MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 1-2** **MATCHAMS 2-10**

"The plan's to stay consistent like last year but I also want to win more races this year. The second race there was too much of a gap after the back-markers. I wanted to come strong at the end – I thought he'd be tired and I felt I had a little left over – but I wasn't close enough to go again, all I'd have done was close the gap a bit."

JAMES NOBLE **MX1 CANADA HEIGHTS 3-3** **MATCHAMS 3-5**

"Two thirds isn't too bad and I had better starts so that's a bonus. I could do with finding a bit more speed so if I can get out with Stephen I can stick with him because once he's away and riding like he is now he's going to take some catching."

"It was a big one. I had a good start and I was coming out the first turn and Tommy got a little bit sideways and I think I hit him. It wasn't Tommy's fault, it was just two riders coming together and I was ejected – I landed on one of the berms on my hip, I thought I'd dislocated it. I had to go back out for the restart and get some points."



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Results - round 2

MX1

1 Stephen Sword	(Kawasaki Racing Team)	30+30=60
2 Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	27+27=54
3 James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	25+25=50
4 Neville Bradshaw	(Motovision Suzuki)	21+21=42
5 Mark Jones	(PAR Honda)	23+19=42
6 Gordon Crockard	(Wulfsport Honda)	19+17=36
7 Mark Hucklebridge	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	8+23=31
8 Martin Barr	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	13+15=28
9 David Campbell	(Honda)	11+9=20
10 Jussi Vehvilainen	(Motovision Suzuki)	5+13=18

MX2

1 Carl Nunn	(EA KTM)	30+27=57
2 Billy MacKenzie	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	23+30=53
3 Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	27+25=52
4 Wayne Smith	(PAR Honda)	25+21=46
5 Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	21+23=44
6 Brad Anderson	(Pioneer Yamaha)	15+19=34
7 Jason Dougan	(RWJ Honda)	17+15=32
8 Martin Kohut	(GOMX Honda)	11+17=28
9 Jamie Law	(Team Green Kawasaki)	9+13=22
10 Elliot Banks-Browne	(RWJ Honda)	13+7=20

Results - round 3

MX1

1 Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	30+30=60
2 Stephen Sword	(Kawasaki Racing Team)	27+27=54
3 James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	25+21=46
4 Gordon Crockard	(Wulfsport Honda)	19+25=44
5 Jordan Rose	(Meredith Honda)	21+23=44
6 Alex Rach	(PAR Honda)	15+19=34
7 Martin Barr	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	17+15=32
8 Mark Jones	(PAR Honda)	23+9=32
9 Neville Bradshaw	(Motovision Suzuki)	11+17=28
10 Mark Eastwood	(250 Wiseco Honda)	13+11=24

MX2

1 Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	30+25=55
2 Billy MacKenzie	(Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	23+30=53
3 Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	25+27=52
4 Wayne Smith	(PAR Honda)	21+19=40
5 Brad Anderson	(Pioneer Yamaha)	15+23=38
6 Carl Nunn	(EA KTM)	27+11=38
7 Martin Kohut	(GOMX Honda)	17+17=34
8 Jake Nicholls	(Motovision Suzuki)	13+9=22
9 George Strik	(KTM)	0+21=21
10 Scott Probert	(Wulfsport Honda)	9+10=19

Series standings

MX1

1 De Dycker 171 points, 2 Sword 158, 3 Noble 144,
4 Crockard 122, 5 Jones 112, 6 Bradshaw 84, 7 Rose 82,
8 Barr 80, 9 Hucklebridge 69, 10 Rach 57

MX2

1 MacKenzie 156 points, 2 Searle 153, 3 Nunn 143,
4 Swanepoel 126, 5 Smith 120, 6 Anderson 114, 7 Dougan 70,
8 Simpson 64, 9 Kohut 62, 10 Probert 62



MARK JONES

MX1 CANADA HEIGHTS 4-6 MATCHAMS 4-12

"I got a really good jump in the first which makes life so much easier and in the second I got another pretty decent jump but went into the first corner and got caught up behind either Jody or Danny Smyth so I was about 30th but I managed to get back through and up to sixth."

MARK HUCKLEBRIDGE

MX1 CANADA HEIGHTS 13-4 MATCHAMS 11-9

"The first race was terrible – there was a mix up with the start and I didn't even have the bike in gear. Then it was cut short so I only managed to get up to 13th. In the second race I had a good start and pulled through a couple of places and got fourth so I was really pleased with that."

"I had a crash last week, hurt my kidneys and had a night in hospital and I've struggled a bit with that today. First race I got a good start but nearly went down and lost a lot of places. In the second I was riding better but was struggling a bit with my kidneys and where I got whacked last week."



STEPHEN SWORD

MX2 CANADA HEIGHTS 1-1 MATCHAMS 2-2

"It's been a perfect day really. I've been looking for this for a while and I really felt good on the bike today. I had a big, big crash in the week and didn't think I'd be able to get in the top three but luckily it all fell into place. It would've been nice if Josh had been here and I could have given him a good race."

"I wasn't very happy with the first race – I think I could've rode better – but the second one I gave it all I had and I think he was giving it all he had and I just couldn't quite stay with him enough to pressure him."



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AFTER AN absence of nine years the British Enduro Championship returns to Scotland where Grampian MCC host the Lossiemouth Enduro, round two of the six-event series. Despite having never organised a round of the British championship before, world class special tests and two challenging days makes the long journey north well worthwhile.

"The special tests were some of the best I've ever ridden," reckons current series leader David Knight. "No-one knew what to expect of the event but I reckon it's one of the best enduros I've ever ridden in."

As well as enjoying the event David also extends his lead in the overall BEC following two convincing day wins. Known for his liking of sandy conditions, Knighter tops day one by close to three minutes and in doing so shows exactly why he is regarded as the world's best enduro rider at present.

Going on to finish the shorter second day two minutes ahead of his nearest rival, David makes it three wins from three starts so far in '06 in the BEC. "The event couldn't have gone better," admits DK. "I knew that the tests would suit me so I just had fun during the weekend. The first day was two hours longer than a world championship event so I was feeling it a bit at the start of day two."

With Knighter topping the overall results on both days, Honda's Paul Edmondson places ahead of TM team-mates Jake Stapleton and Euan McConnell while Honda-mounted youngster Si Wakely finishes fourth.

With Edmondson unable to match Knighter's blistering pace on either day he still manages to place comfortably ahead of his younger E2 class mates, despite a slow start to the event. Going on to post the quickest E2 class times on all but a handful of the event's special tests Paul's happy to have topped the E2 class.

"Jake is getting faster but I did what I wanted to do and that was to win the E2 class," explains Paul. "Knighter is just too fast so I'm concentrating on winning my class. I was a little bit slow to get going on day one but I felt I rode well on both days. I've really enjoyed the event."

After Husqvarna rider Chris Hockey won the E1 class at the series opener when several of his class rivals dropped time, in Scotland it's current E1 British champion Edward Jones who tops the results. Placing his 125cc KTM at the head of the E1 class results on both days, Ed finishes best of a trio of eighth-litre KTM riders on day one as Richard Hay and Andrew Edwards follow him home.

On day two Ed narrowly defeats Honda rider Jason Thomas as the pair are separated by less than one second. Despite getting pushed all day long Ed comes out on top to claim the top spot ahead of Thomas with Hay third.

Results

Day one

1	David Knight (KTM)	3050.83
2	Paul Edmondson (Honda)	3212.97
3	Jake Stapleton (TM)	3296.29
4	Euan McConnell (TM)	3330.79
5	Si Wakely (Honda)	3374.12
6	Edward Jones (KTM)	3381.03
7	Richard Hay (KTM)	3395.71
8	Andrew Edwards (KTM)	3412.54
9	Tom Sagar (Honda)	3415.22
10	Ricky Mair (Husqvarna)	3418.00

Day two

1	David Knight (KTM)	2428.87
2	Paul Edmondson (Honda)	2545.49
3	Jake Stapleton (TM)	2569.52
4	Euan McConnell (TM)	2632.77
5	Si Wakely (Honda)	2637.79
6	Ed Jones (KTM)	2662.30
7	Jason Thomas (Honda)	2662.75
8	Andrew Edwards (KTM)	2708.08
9	Richard Hay (KTM)	2708.79
10	Ricky Mair (Husqvarna)	2724.17

SCOTTISH POWER!

**The British Enduro Championship
heads north to bonnie Scotland**

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds



**Euan McConnell goes
4-4 on home turf**

Everts doubles up in Portugal as his closest rival Tortelli sees his challenge come to a premature end





SHUT OUT!

Three rounds down and Everts and Rattray have yet to lose an overall while Tortelli joins Coppins and Pichon on the MIA list

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

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AND THEN there was one! Josh pops out his shoulder before Zolder, Pichon calls it a day after seven laps and by the end of the Iberian adventure Dyno has to be put to sleep to put his hip back in place.

That's the savage truth of MX1 in 2006 as the man himself just keeps on winning. Three straight GP overalls and his 90th career GP victory at Agueda in Portugal. Is the Stefan Everts freight train unstoppable?

"It's a pity Josh, Mickael and Sebastien are all out but there are some good young guys so I have to treat them seriously," says Stefan. "Kevin Strijbos has beaten me in two motos this year, Ken De Dycker has come on strong this year, Tanel Leok pushed all the way to the last lap in Spain and I know Jonathan Barragan has good condition so I couldn't relax in Portugal either."

Could it all be down to his gear?

"The white gear is so cool but that's the last time you'll see me racing in it. I lost the first moto at Zolder and Bellpuig wearing it and won both motos in blue today. I wore the white in warm-up this morning and even fell off there!"

The simple truth is that the man is a class act.

After sharing top points at Zolder, Tortelli is expected to extend Stefan all year but the Frenchman is an accident waiting to happen at Bellpuig and "I made many mistakes there" is the understatement of the year. His excuse – "I hurt my ankle at Zolder and had to fly to America for 15 hours between the races" – may be contributory but hanging off the bike almost every lap is not the way to beat Everts.

In Portugal Dyno is a second-a-lap faster but only leads for a mile-and-a-half all day. The first moto is a game of cat and mouse with a difference – it's the mouse that dictates the show!

"I knew I had to get out in front and defend the inside line," admits Everts. After 20 minutes storming the rougher outside lines Tortelli finally finds a way through but within half-a-lap Everts hits back. "It was an aggressive pass but I had to get back in front and block again."

"The man is magic," gasps Fox Europe's Ash Kane. "He just opened it up and slammed his way back past."

More frustration, more narrow escapes for Tortelli, one massive 'oh my god' three laps from home and on the final lap he flies over the bars in mid-air and trails in 20 seconds down at the finish.

A heavily bruised instep is hurting most but five minutes into race two the Frenchman is in agony. Even the holeshot doesn't help as Everts repeats his race one pass at the third turn and a lap-and-a-half later Tortelli splatters the ground at the end of the 'Kiwi waves' (Greg Atkins – "as long as they're not above 80 centimetres high and are two metres apart they're not whoops").

"His right hip is dislocated – they're putting it back in under anaesthetic here at the track," reports Kaptain Kurt who's back on track team leader duties again for two races after Georges



**MX1 first lap
chaos in Portugal**

Jobe has his track pass confiscated for pointing out lines to Tortelli during practice.

"Will he be able to race in Germany?" ask press room colleagues who have clearly never had a dislocated hip before. "Been there, done that," grimaces Honda's Roger Harvey, "you're better off breaking it."

"I just rang Stefan's personal doctor back in Belgium," tells Belgian journalist Jurgen Schrooten. "He says the pain is unbearable for seven to eight weeks and Tortelli will probably be out for three to four months."

Stefan is genuinely upset when he hears the verdict. "When I saw Sebastien lying in the track I lost concentration and my lap times went up by two seconds."

But the man with all the records knows he is now racing for another target which was still just a dream four weeks earlier. If he keeps on winning not only the 10th world title beckons but he could break 100 GP wins at Desertmartin in August. And if anything can keep Stefan going it's the prospect of records!

In MX2 there's a new record man on the horizon too. Okay, back in 1996 when they still raced 125 two-strokes Tortelli won 11 straight (though a fuel irregularity means the records show the run got cut short at seven) and Everts also won seven consecutive in 2003 but BT never won more than two in a row before DNFin in '04 and Styla has now recorded six straight wins since he came back at the Isle of Wight.

The Agueda win is even sweeter – it was there he wrecked his shoulder last year. "I wasn't thinking about it. I'm a positive person and don't let things like that worry me."

Pre-season the South African told DBR that consistency would be the key and so it has been, not only over the season but also in each GP. At the end of last year Tyla won three GPs but only two motos and his '06 record is the same.

Cairolì is matching him for moto wins and his top moto score at the third GP is an identical 22 but the Sicilian trails by 39 after a disaster in one moto at every GP so far. At Bellpuig he crashes in a desperate attempt to round Nunny midway through the first moto on the overwatered track and spends a lap trapped under his bike and at Agueda he has to sprint back to his steed at turn one and only just makes top 10 at the close. "The '06 Yam is a better bike all round but we have not yet got it as good out of the gate. It is something we must work on."

Marc De Reuver has been working on his weakness. "Heah, tell them to print up some stickers to put over that 'Crash King' headline last month. I'm Mister Consistency now." Indeed he is having emulated Rattray's string of six top five finishes – but has the bubbling Dutchman lost speed in the process? His best scores are two thirds.

The only moto winners other than Rattray and Cairolì are Philippaerts and Gundersen



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The Crock Star finally scores in Portugal



Billy Mac chases Nunny

but the Italian has struggled since winning the opening moto of the year and the Norwegian struggled to nine points with a recurrence of knee problems after running away with the opener in Spain.

Old fox Chiodi is still rattling up scores without being a danger for the win and Rattray's closest challenger is Christophe Pourcel. His 2-2 scoreline in Portugal is amazing – minutes before the first moto the 17-year-old throws up twice on the board behind the gate. It's a good job he's not a flat race jockey or he might get disqualified at the post-race weigh-in!

Motocrossers have other problems and Swordy is the first victim. Forced to pull out in Spain with back pains, the Scot has just finished seventh in Portugal when the technical staff pull him over for a noise test. The Kawasaki registers 101 decibels and the minute penalty pushes him back to 18th.

Back in the Dorna days noise was put on the back burner and the teams even agreed not to protest each other. The title should be decided on merit, not on the luck of the draw and the quirks of electronic surveillance.

But the boffins at the FIM have been left to work in splendid isolation on technical matters. Their 'perfect' equipment measures the same silencer on the same machine three decibels different within the space of five minutes at tech in Spain and everybody was two db higher in Portugal as they pointed the silencers straight at an earth wall. And an appeal is not allowed as the result is considered 'a matter of fact'. Perhaps Giuseppe could have a word in their ear about spoiling the show!

The other Brits are gradually getting back into it after a desperate day at Zolder.

Nunny struggles in quali but has a different head on come race day and is now sixth in points, Billy Mac takes a podium in Spain and Tommy Searle is the expected revelation of the year – five double figure scores from six motos – and the kid does it in exhilarating style, just to prove that four-strokes can be ridden with verve!

Gareth Swanepoel is coming to terms with living in the shadows and is chasing the boy home as he battles the discomfort from his wrist but Shaun Simpson has yet to score after crashes and Jason Dougan misses the cut in Portugal after wrenching his back.

Ken De Dycker is the man in MX1, just missing the podium every GP so far with full-on commitment, Pascal Leuret is consistent but James Noble is not and suffers breathing difficulties with a throat full of flob after a cold. Julien Bill gets back-to-back top 10s while Mark Hucklebridge's 100 per cent scoring record is ended by Johnny Lindhe at turn one in Portugal.

Under the Wulf Honda awning the Crock Star can finally see some light at the end of the tunnel. Bellpuig starts badly when Iain and Burnsy fill up the water tank in the camper using a pipe that's been lying in diesel. Then a rock busts his lip inside and out on the first lap of racing and he has to sit through Easter Monday before he can find a dentist to glue his front teeth back into place. But there are points on the table after Portugal and, more important, a touch of class in his riding.

So who can stop Stefan and Tyla? Tune in next month for the answer (if we've got one)...

Results - round 2

MX1

1 Stefan Everts	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	20+25=45
2 Tanel Leok	(Motorex Kawasaki)	22+22=44
3 Steve Ramon	(Team Suzuki)	15+20=35
4 Jonathan Barragan	(Red Bull KTM)	18+14=32
5 Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	16+15=31
6 Sebastien Tortelli	(Red Bull KTM)	14+16=30
7 Cedric Melotte	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	11+18=29
8 Kevin Stribos	(Team Suzuki)	25+2=27
9 Pascal Leuret	(Multitek Honda)	10+12=22
10 Julien Bill	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	13+9=22
13 James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	12+3=15
19 Mark Hucklebridge	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	3+4=7

MX2

1 Tyla Rattray	(Champ KTM)	16+22=38
2 Marc De Reuver	(Champ KTM)	20+16=36
3 Billy MacKenzie	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	13+20=33
4 Alessio Chiodi	(Ricci Yamaha)	22+11=33
5 Christophe Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	18+14=32
6 Kenneth Gundersen	(Ricci Yamaha)	25+2=27
7 David Philippaerts	(Champ KTM)	11+15=26
8 Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	0+25=25
9 Luigi Seguy	(JK Yamaha)	12+12=24
10 Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	14+9=23
15 Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	0+10=10
16 Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	10+0=10
24 Jason Dougan	(RWJ Honda)	6+0=6

Results - round 3

MX1

1 Stefan Everts	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	25+25=50
2 Jonathan Barragan	(Red Bull KTM)	16+22=38
3 Kevin Stribos	(Team Suzuki)	18+20=38
4 Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	20+16=36
5 Tanel Leok	(Motorex Kawasaki)	15+18=33
6 Manuel Priem	(Van Beers Yamaha)	8+15=22
7 Sebastien Tortelli	(Red Bull KTM)	22+0=22
8 Franco Garcia Vico	(Martin Honda)	10+10=20
9 Pascal Leuret	(Multitek Honda)	6+13=19
10 Julien Bill	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	4+14=18
11 Gordon Crockard	(Wulfspor Honda)	9+8=17
13 Stephen Sword	(Motorex Kawasaki)	11+3=14
15 James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	13+0=13

MX2

1 Tyla Rattray	(Champ KTM)	20+25=45
2 Christophe Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	22+22=44
3 Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	25+11=36
4 Marc De Reuver	(Champ KTM)	18+16=34
5 Alessio Chiodi	(Ricci Yamaha)	13+20=33
6 Billy MacKenzie	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	14+15=29
7 Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	16+13=29
8 Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	11+14=25
9 Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	10+12=22
10 Patrick Caps	(SRS Honda)	0+18=18

Series standings

MX1

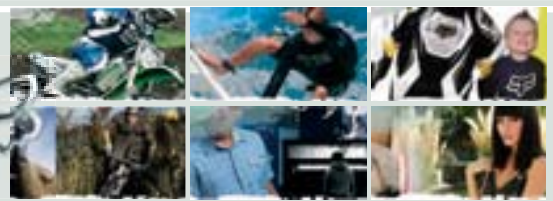
1 Everts 142 points, 2 Leok 115, 3 Tortelli 99, 4 Stribos 98, 5 Barragan 97, 6 De Dycker 97, 7 Ramon 83, 8 Melotte 66, 9 Leuret 66, 10 Priem 53... 12 Noble 42... 14 Sword 40... 15 Bill 40... 20 Crockard 17... 23 Hucklebridge 12

MX2

1 Rattray 128, 2 C Pourcel 108, 3 De Reuver 108, 4 Cairoli 89, 5 Chiodi 81, 6 Nunn 76, 7 Philippaerts 74, 8 MacKenzie 74, 9 Gundersen 73, 10 Searle 57... 27 Dougan 7



Tortelli has to ride on the edge to stay with Stefan



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Rising Son! An injured Fujigas takes a surprise win in Portugal



FUJIGUTS!

Takahisa Fujinami breaks through the pain barrier to take a surprise win in Portugal

Words by g2f.co.uk Photos by Eric Kitchen

STAYING IN Southern Europe, the world trials circus moves to Portugal for the second round a week after the series opener in Spain.

A different country brings a different winner as an injured Takahisa Fujinami records a shock win. Also flying the four-stroke flag, Fuji's Repsol Montesa/HRC team-mate Dougie Lampkin is once again on the podium but he can count himself lucky to follow Gas Gas-mounted Adam Raga home in third spot after he twice fails at the penultimate section through no fault but his own.

Beta's #1 rider and winner of the Spanish Grand Prix, Antonio Bou only manages fourth position ahead of Gasser pilot Jeroni Fajardo and Sherco's Albert Cabestany as none of the Spanish trio shine at a trial that should suit them well.

British success extends beyond Dougie with reigning world junior champ James Dabill taking a career best seventh in the top class – and it could have been even better but for a couple of loose mistakes on each lap.

Dabill's Top Trial Beta team-mate Michael Brown continues to make a nuisance of himself in the Junior category as he records yet another victory against the much more favoured Spanish opposition. With his foreign rivals squabbling over the lower rostrum placings, Brown now holds a healthy lead in the overall standings.

Three young Brits pack the top 10 in the Youth class. Gas Gas rider Alexz Wigg leads the teen troop as he takes his second successive runner-up position behind Loris Gubian from France mounted on a 125cc

Sherco. And Lee Sampson recovers from a relatively poor showing in Spain to slot into fourth as just three marks separate five riders in this highly competitive class. Wigg's British Gas Gas compatriot Sam Haslam finishes in eighth as the UK confirms itself as the strongest nation in this hotbed of emerging talent.

Sixth at the initial round in Spain, Fujinami returns to Barcelona for further treatment to his badly injured and infected clutch finger and is unable to ride on the run up to the Portuguese event. Well aware of his predicament, Fuji has nothing more in mind than a damage limitation exercise and is overcome as he rides to victory.

"This is an incredible and quite unexpected victory both for me and the team. My main objective during the opening two rounds was to get some points as I knew I would be riding ▶



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A sprinkling of mistakes can't keep Dougie off the podium



Results

Round 2

1 Takahisa Fujinami	(Montesa)	7
2 Adam Raga	(Gas Gas)	9
3 Dougie Lampkin	(Montesa)	18
4 Toni Bou	(Beta)	20
5 Jeroni Fajardo	(Gas Gas)	23
6 Albert Cabestany	(Sherco)	29
7 James Dabill	(Beta)	37
8 Jordi Pascuet	(Gas Gas)	37
9 Tadeusz Blazusiak	(Scorpa)	39
10 Marc Freixa	(Scorpa)	51

Series standings

1 Raga 34 points, 2 Bou 33, 3 Fujinami 30, 4 Lampkin 40, 5 Cabestany 23, 6 Fajardo 22, 7 Freixa 15, 8 Blazusiak 15, 9 Dabill 14, 10 Pascuet 14

with a badly injured finger in both competitions. Sixth last week was a good result so I came here thinking that with the easier sections maybe I could finish on the podium. I never expected to win so I really want to say thanks to my team and to my doctor."

Unlike the Spanish round the venue on the outskirts of the small Portuguese town of Mortagua, situated 100km south of the city of Porto, offers little variety or severity in terms of sections. All but two of the 15 hazards are laid out on the steep and dusty hillside on either side of the local river. Even the final man-made zone lacks imagination having been constructed from blocks of brick rubble from a nearby demolished building.

Raga holds nothing back in the post trial press conference and is only reinforcing the

thoughts of the other top riders. "This was not a world championship trial in any way, the sections lacked quality and gave none of us the chance to recover once we had made a mistake. The only positive is that I am leading the series despite not winning either of the first two rounds. My happiness is limited as I really need to be winning to give myself confidence."

Riding tense and nervous in the easy conditions, Lampkin opts for safety early on with a steady dab in section four. However, his calculated approach runs out four hazards later as Dougie slips off line and dislodges a large rock that halts his passage. This is the first of three maximums for the ex-champion.

"Mistakes have cost me again today, much like last week I have had two fives on a section where there is a big step. It is quite obvious that

you cannot make this kind of error without paying the price and that has been the case today. Overall I have ridden well but I need to get the other bit sorted out as I must count myself lucky to have still finished on the podium today when the trial was so easy."

The grey overcast sky that is present for most of the day – and provides an appropriate backdrop for an event which at best can be described as dull – gives way to rain as the final lap gets under way. The falling moisture threatens to add some interest to the trial but in reality it has no effect on the outcome and does no more than create a damp finale for the limited but enthusiastic audience.

The six-week break will now give the championship time to reshape before it resumes for a double header in the USA.

wtc

Defending champ Adam Raga leads after two rounds



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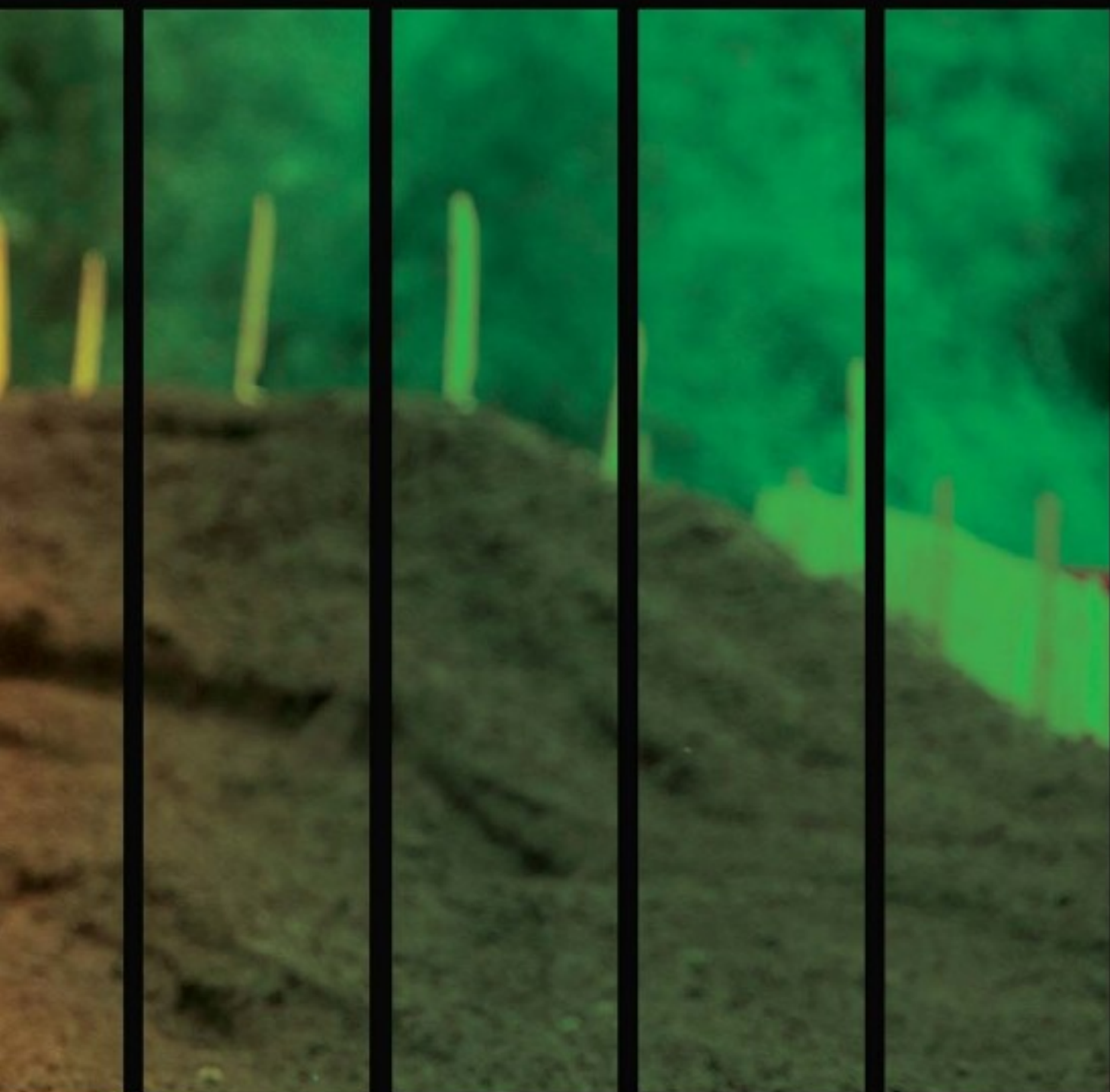
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"It felt like people had forgotten about me. It was cool to come back and show people that I could ride a bike. It was a good day."

DV 12



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HIGH LIFE!

EAST KENT CLUB'S ANNUAL YOUTH INTERNATIONAL HITS THE HEIGHTS – THAT'S CANADA HEIGHTS!

I t's been a while since I last visited the annual international motocross held by the East Kent schoolboy club at Canada Heights so I figured it was about time I jumped in the Chusmobile and checked it out once more.

With the majority of riders from not so far flung places such as Kent and Essex this year's festival of fun didn't quite have a continental twist like the old days but it seemed the majority had a great time.

Entries were full in all classes weeks in advance – mostly by club members but with a sprinkling of national stars topping up the entry list. This made for good racing even in the sloppy and wet conditions.

This event is the only time that youth riders get to ride the famous circuit which is a shame as Canada Heights is certainly one of the best race tracks in the country. Maybe in the not too distant future the Sidcup club who run the circuit may allow a BYMX national to take place.

I had a chat with the East Kent club's chairman Tony Read who gave me a brief history of the famous event. "Canada Heights international has been going for around 14 years and in that time we've seen many riders

taking the leap from youth to world class competition. Riders such as Kevin Strijbos, Stephen Sword, Billy MacKenzie and Tommy Searle who even had time to come down this weekend to see old friends after his dramatic first ever Maxxis British championship victory.

"Unfortunately, our continental contacts have moved on to other things so in the last few years the number of foreign riders have decreased somewhat but maybe next year we can invite a few over with a little help from yourselves."

As normal the British weather let us down and it poured all Sunday night which made the track very slippery for most of the day but when the sun did shine the gloom disappeared and the circuit became near perfect for racing. But the crowds were good and there seemed to be a lot of race fans there – not just family members – which is good to see and as far as I know no serious injuries were reported.

I spoke with more than a few riders and they all enjoyed the experience of racing at Canada Heights. With over 300 riders everyone involved in the event had their work cut out but I can honestly say everyone I met from the club had a smile on their face. Well done and many thanks to Denise from the East Kent club for inviting Rage along – see you next year.





HELP AARON!

It's with great regret that we have to report on another serious injury in our sport. On Good Friday Aaron Morgan was practising near Salisbury when he sustained a serious injury to his back which has left him paralysed. Aaron has been moved from the ITU at Southampton Hospital into the high dependency unit where he is making a slow but steady recovery.

Aaron started riding at seven years of age and has achieved top 10 results with Portsmouth club each year. On his favourite Yamaha machinery Aaron moved up to the 125cc class last year and came second in the Meon Valley club championship.

Aaron's 15 years old and a student at Costello College of Technology in Basingstoke where he has achieved A and A* grades in all his mock exams. Aaron's great ambition in life is to become a pilot. He is a bright, happy and courageous young man who is very popular. It is fantastic that everyone has sent their best wishes and support to him when he needs it most.

A huge thank you to Portsmouth, Meon Valley, Ringwood and East Kent clubs, Action Sport Photography, South Coast Racing, Bagnalls and the Pioneer Yamaha Team for all their support and the generous donations from all the motocross community.

If you would like to make a donation to assist Aaron in the future you can make a deposit to the Aaron Morgan Trust, NatWest Bank, PO Box 6451, 3 London Street, Basingstoke RG21 7FP. The sort code for the account is 60-02-49 and the account number is 71127127. For credit card donations please contact South Coast Racing on **01329 826268**.



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DUTCH COURAGE!

I think we may have another superstar on our hands! Jack Kelly, the talented northern nipper, is not only leading the BYMX championship in the UK but is also second in the Dutch championship as well.

Jack made the trip to Holland for the first round of their championship and found the going a lot easier on his modified big-wheeled 65cc machine. "The big wheels helped a lot in the deep sand and hopefully after my second overall I can go one step better at the next round," says an excited Jack.

Jack also has his own website where you can follow Jack's progress throughout the season – www.kellys-motocross.co.uk

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Last month we had a plea from John Hewitson asking for information on try-out days for kids who were interested in motocross. I was struggling to come up with anything at all and before I'd found something useful for John he'd already figured it all out. I'll let him fill you in...

"I contacted Geoff Mayes and Mark Parker at www.mxtryout.co.uk and they arranged a three-hour try-out for me and my son at Wildtracks near Newmarket. The cost included all the equipment, bikes and instruction. The additional advantage for me was that I was also able to ride one of their bikes.

"We learned a great deal about how to ride the bikes and then had a couple of hours or more to ride around the track and practice. The whole set-up was very professional and the instruction for both of us was friendly and informative. We enjoyed it so much that we have booked another session with Geoff and Mark at the end of May.

"It really is a great way to find out if children will take to motocross without having the large initial outlay for bike, equipment and transport. The other advantage is that if the adults ride they will understand the physical demands that it's making on their children."

If you're looking to start motocross and fancy a try-out day at Wildtracks give Geoff a call on **01379 852452**.

LYTH'SLIDS!

Christian Lyth, the talented 12-year-old from Ruskington near Sleaford, recently picked up his yearly supply of race helmets from KBC's Connie Wan Docksey.

Christian is to take a shot at this year's nationals and is hoping to finish in the top 15 by the end of the season. Christian knows he's a very lucky lad in getting so much support from the following companies – Gear4 KTM, NGK, Simba, KBC Helmets, B&C Express, Moggstar Extreme Tech Clothing and Paul Would from Lincoln who will be preparing the lucky nipper's machines. Good luck Christian!



TEAMTALK!

Dorset dirt bike dealers MX World have finally released their squad details for the 2006 season. The six-strong team of good-looking lads comprises 85cc riders Sonny Thompson, Ryan Butler and Jackson Evans while Kirk Richards will be hoping to follow on from 2005 and take another British title on his KTM 125. Finally, Lewis Hall and Jesse Peterson will be flying the flag at BSMA AMX and adult races throughout the country.

"It's the second year of running the team and hopefully it will go from strength to strength," says team boss Andy Hall. "I want to say a massive thank you to all our sponsors Thor MX, ultimatepursuits.co.uk, Cycra Plastics, No-Toil, Utopia Optics and Engine Ice.

"I'd also like to thank last year's riders and wish them all the best. We're also looking at starting an academy in the near future to give youth riders the opportunity to progress in the sport."

Nice one lads keep up the good work!



LUKE NEWMAN



AGE: 11
BIKE: STICKERCHICK SUZUKI SW85
YEARS RACING: 7
KIT: FLY
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 55
TITLES: 1
BROKEN BONES: 7
TRUCK/VAN: MERCEDES ATEGO

CONNOR WALKLEY



AGE: 11
BIKE: TEAM GREEN KAWASAKI SW85
YEARS RACING: 5
KIT: KENNY
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 110
TITLES: NONE
BROKEN BONES: 2
TRUCK/VAN: FORD TRANSIT

YOUTH ACADEMY

The details of the 2006 ACU motocross academy have now been finalised. The squad of riders are Steven Clarke, Ashley Greedy, Sam Davis, Josh Waterman, Daniel Arnold, Conor Butler, Connor Walkley and Lewis Tombs and they'll all receive intense fortnightly training session from ACU coach Justin Morris.

"The purpose of the academy is to bring on and nurture the best riders in the country and prepare them for their next level of racing which is the British championship and for some the GPs," explains Justin.

"Every three years we will look at changing the academy riders and we are looking at fresh riders all of the time.

"We have a try-out day once a year and all riders who participate in the BYMX national series are welcome. I travel to all the events throughout the season so I know who's hot and who's not."

Keep your eyes peeled as a full interview with Justin and the lads will appear in DBR soon – including the spectacular Sam Davis pictured below!



ENDUROKING!

The world of enduros has finally hit the pages of Rage thanks to 16-year-old Kawasaki rider Bradley King who recently took part in the first round of the BEC at Brandon Park.

"I had a great start to the event and clocked the fastest time in the Clubman special test section," explains Bradley. "Unfortunately, back markers got in the way and I ended up ninth in the Clubman class and the fourth E1 rider."

Bradley has to miss the second round as he's not 17 yet so can't legally hold a road licence but he can ride the rest of the rounds that are held on private land. Bradley started riding trials at 10 years of age and moved to motocross at 14 but now rides enduro. We may have another Knighter on our hands here – keep up the good work Bradders!

COMMENT

WHAT'S HAPPENING to our sport? Rounds of both youth national series were cancelled in March due to bad weather. One has been scrapped and the other was meant to be run at a brand new circuit which was not capable of holding a club meeting let alone a British championship event.

On a brighter note in next month's Rage I will be reporting from Gemert in Holland at the second round of the European Youth championships. A whole host of top 85cc riders have been invited and a small selection of 125 future stars as well. So watch out for 'what's hot and what's not' from Gemert in the next issue.

Until next time, ride safe...

Chuss



Got any youth news for Rage?

Give Ray Chuss a bell on 07773 609994 or

email him at dbryoutheditor@raychuss.com

MR MOTIVATOR!

IF THE THOUGHT OF BILLY'S DAD IN A LYCRA ONE-PIECE IS PRETTY SCARY, IMAGINE HOW FRIGHTENING HE IS WHEN HE'S ANGRY? NO WONDER BILLY PULLED HIS FINGER OUT AT MATCHAMS!



HELLO ALL! Welcome to the new Mac211 column! I'm going to try make it as fun as possible for you guys to read because we all know you'll need cheering up after reading Swordy's column! It's okay, put the knife down! Har har!

So we all know Tiffy is back on the scene, I think DBR are trying to get us back together or something. At Matchams Sean came over to me with a stack of posters for me to sign and hand out (it was the same poster you got with your DBR last month) and as most of you will know, it was me on one side and Tiff on the other! And it's okay, I won't take offence if Tiffy's on your walls instead of me – I know I'd do the same thing (but I'd probably put it on the ceiling above my bed)!

Well done to her for getting her job back but what happened to Cassita? Maybe Sean can fill us in with some details...

I guess most of you have been reading the race reports and stuff, it's already been a hectic start to the season. I feel like I've never been off the bike! I've done more testing, riding and training than ever this year and things are going okay so far. I just got hold of that red plate which is pretty cool...first time I've had that! I want to keep it too...

I've been staying consistent this year but consistently slow! I still feel like I have been riding way below par. Only races I've felt really 100 per cent were Hawkstone third race and Canada Heights second race. After that last race at Matchams I had a talk with my dad and team and I think now's the time to start putting in some good quality rides and stretching that championship lead. I've just been feeling a little cautious but now we have the first few rounds out the way I want to start charging again. I've shown myself now I can be consistent so that's a worry I don't have anymore. I just want to get back to winning!

I got my ass felt big time off my dad after the first race at Matchams! He went skitz at me! And rightly so, I rode shocking! I was trying to find a good pace to settle at but just chose all the wrong lines and started pumping up. Seriously, I got back to my camper and my dad was already there – he had obviously left the race early in disgust and was reading a home improvement magazine!

Seconds felt like minutes... After what felt like 20 minutes of nervous waiting the big man spoke and I'm sure DBR won't be able to print what was said, or even understand the broad Scottish accent of my dad! But it rang clear in my head and I knew the next race had to be a good one! I just hope my first races improve from now on!

From a rider's point of view hearing some cold hard facts from your dad is quite terrifying. If you heard it from anyone else then you would just ignore them and think you are still the b*****s. But when your dad sits you down, you know it's true. You sit there looking into your palms, never into his eye. Like being told off by your teacher but knowing you have to do something about it. Taking every sentence in and thinking it over for hours after. Feeling so bad that you've let him down and really wanting to show him you can do it.

Your dad has been the one guy who has been there from the start, the one guy that knows exactly what makes you tick, exactly how you ride the bike, what gets you fired up, even how to beat the opposition. So when dad speaks, you listen! Oh and

there is the chance he will always kick your arse if you don't!

I think the funniest thing though was while I was getting my talk from dad my suspension guru Andrew Bell was also sat in on 'the meeting' and I'm sure he didn't understand a word that was being said. When a Scottish person gets angry the words that follow come a million miles an hour and the conversation's filled with short sharp Scottish swear words that only northerners can understand!

So my dad was in one of his spitting rages while I only had a few comebacks at some of the things that weren't true. And Andrew was there to back me up on them, although I did have to translate before my dad and I could carry on spitting in each others' faces.

I think there should be interviews with them instead of the riders! There would be no holding back with them that's for sure! Think of the celebrities you could have? Roy Higgs! Keith Thorpe! Big Bill! Phil Anderson! That would make some interesting reading. They could give all the inside gossip on what makes us tick and all the stories of what they have done in the past to get us fired up! I know my dad would have loads to tell, so imagine what the others' dads could say...



Anyway, the talk seemed to work, I got my finger out for the second race at Matchams and I now feel confident I can keep putting in the same rides from now on that will hopefully take me and the team to the championship this year.

The world championship has started slowly this year but I've been consistent after the first mishap in Zolder. And the same now applies to that championship as the British – time to start charging!

The road trip to Spain and Portugal was pretty cool, there was a big convoy of all the British lads at a small campsite in Barra next to the white sandy beaches of Avero in Portugal. The sand was too tempting so I grabbed a few lads and set off in search of some cool dunes to play on, we cranked our trusty practice bikes up and rode along the road to the dunes I had seen while cycling. We spent all day finding some pretty big jumps and railing some nice white dunes. One jump was a fourth gear pinned double! We have some video of it so once I get my website able to hold video I'll chuck them on.

We had a really chilled week at the campsite, it's nice having the far away races because then it always seems like a little break.

Looking forward to the rest of the season now! Cheers lads...

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